



INDEPENDENT

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Republic of Ireland 45p

FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 1995

2810

SECTION TWO

METRO

Your complete
going-out guide.

Chaos predicted despite official advice not to panic over thrombosis warning

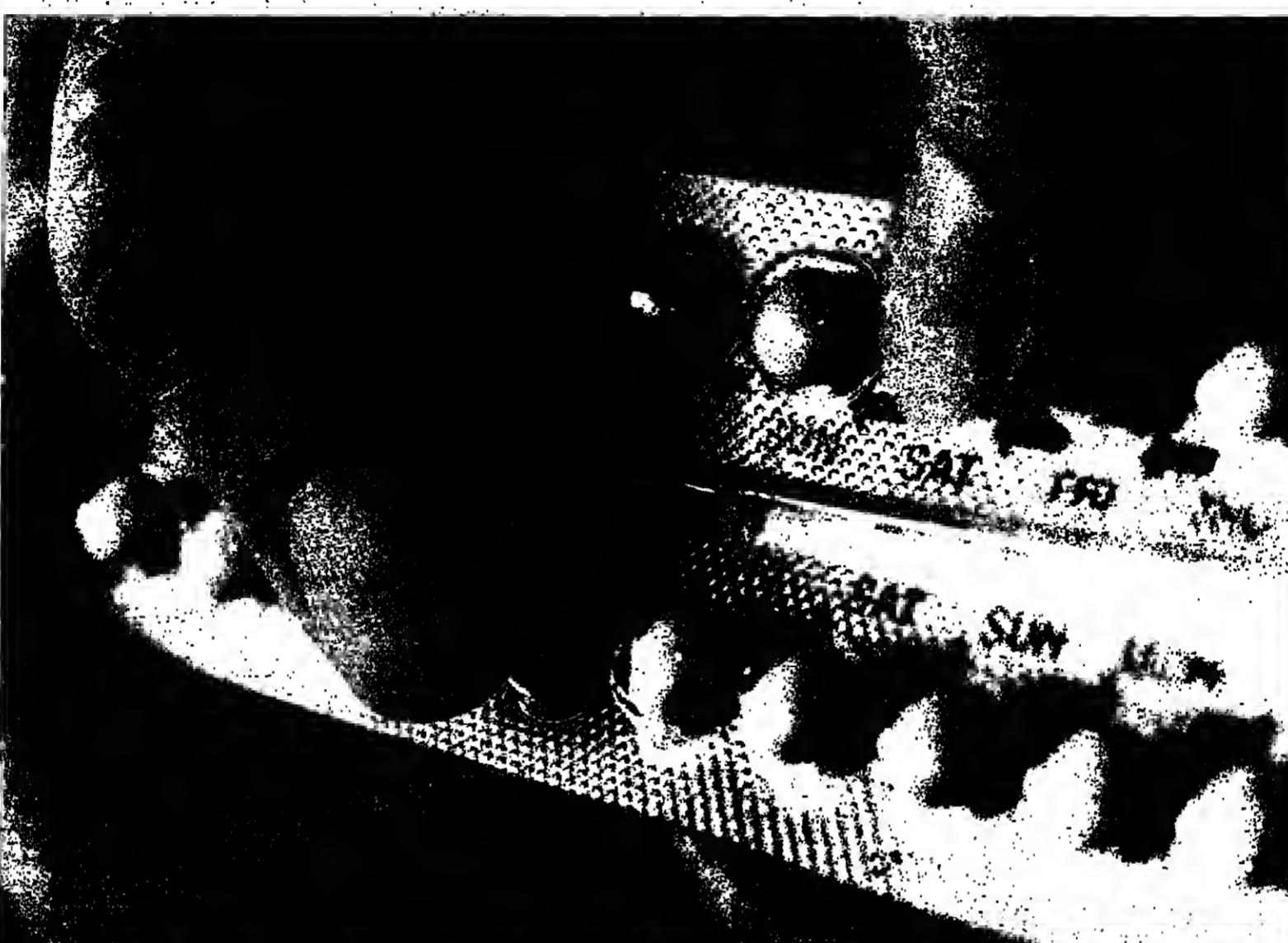
Pill alert for a million women

JOHN VON RADOWITZ

The Government yesterday warned more than a million women of danger from a widely used contraceptive pill which was previously thought to be the safest on the market.

The combined oral contraceptive has been recommended by doctors and family planning clinics since it was introduced to Britain in the last decade.

While the Government's Committee on Safety of Medicines was accused of acting too



A bitter pill: The new brands of combined oral contraceptive were thought to be the safest ever, but now experts are raising doubts about them

were expecting a deluge of calls.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organisation was said to be furious that data was taken from an unpublished study it had carried out.

The pills all contain one of two particular types of the hormone progestogen, combined with oestrogen, and are taken by about 50 per cent of

British women who use oral contraceptives.

When the pills were introduced in Britain they were hailed as an important advance and were said to protect against ovarian and womb cancer, as well as pelvic infections that can cause infertility. The new formula was also thought to cut the risk of stroke, as opposed to veins, thrombosis. Arterial

stroke risks can lead to strokes and heart attacks.

New research now appears to indicate that the risk of deep vein thrombosis with the combined pill is six times the normal average and double that faced by women who use other types of contraceptive pill.

However, experts were keen to stress that even this level of risk represents a ratio of only three in every 10,000 for healthy young women – half the natural risk of thrombosis during pregnancy.

Professor Michael Rawlins,

chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, told a news conference at the Department of Health that he had written to all doctors and pharmacists about the findings.

"For women who are on

cycle should be finished. Women who are taking any other brand can be reassured about the safety of their pill and that there is no need to change. For the vast majority of women, the pill is a safe and highly effective form of contraception."

First indications of a problem with the pills emerged in July from the World Health Organisation study. At that stage the findings were incomplete and inconsistent, but Government health officials were sufficiently alarmed to urge a speeding-up of another study on the same subject under way in Europe. Its results were obtained this month.

Final confirmation that action had to be taken came after the Committee on Safety of Medicines conducted a rapid study of its own using information from a GP database.

The question of whether to withdraw the pills was discussed with family planning experts but was rejected partly because there are women who cannot tolerate any other types of contraceptive pill.

Government scientists cannot explain why the combinations pills are less safe but are examining the theory that the risk is linked to a reaction between the two hormones.

However, Dr Anne Szarewski, senior clinical medical officer at the Margaret Pyke Centre, in London, a leading family planning clinic, last night described the Government's reaction as irresponsible and premature.

"We don't even know what numbers were involved in these studies, and small-scale studies are subject to a fair amount of bias," she said.

West Sussex-based Schering Health Care, which manufactures Femodene, Triadecane and Tri-Minulet, said: "The company is deeply concerned about actions which could result in undue concern and anxiety in users, which may arise from the controversy."

"Health Information Service freephone 0800 665544."

British blood sold to Turkey for profit

EXCLUSIVE

LOUISE JURY and HUGH POPE

British-made blood products are on sale abroad at four times the UK price, despite promises to donors that there is no commercial exploitation.

Repeated reassurances from the National Blood Authority, designed to allay donors' fears over what happens to their blood, were undermined yesterday by the first details of the overseas mark-ups.

A Turkish price list seen by the *Independent* shows Factor VIII, a blood by-product used to treat haemophiliacs, on sale for four times the price paid by some British hospitals.

Mr Osman Karaomeroglu, of Sodhan Medical Instruments Manufacturing and Trading Company, the licensed distributor for the British products in Turkey, said it was the common practice for his government to multiply the price of imported medicine by two or three times.

Although details of the pricing of the British products is unknown, Kadir Sonmez, a Turkish ministry of health spokesman, confirmed: "The original company sends an invoice. Then we apply an exchange rate and legal profits."

A spokeswoman for the National Blood Authority (NBA), whose commercial arm is the Bio Products Laboratory (BPL), said while it could not control overseas practices, it made no money out of the trade and only sold surpluses.

"We have a choice. We either burn the surpluses or we can offer them for sale and the money we get from these sales goes back into the service," she said.

But the revelations increased some doctors and donors, many of whom have never been told where their blood goes.

Secret trade, page 10

II suspended
provoked attack

PM condemns West book deal

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Arts Reporter

The Prime Minister, John Major, told the House of Commons he felt "extreme distress" for the controversial sale of Fred West's biography brokered by the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris.

The deal agreed a fortnight ago between Mr Harris, the biographer Geoffrey Wansell and the publisher Hodder Headline, was revealed by the *Independent* yesterday. Mr Harris made the deal as trustee for the West estate after the Gloucester builder who was charged with 12 counts of murder hanged himself.

It includes the largely valuable assets of 132 police copies of interviews with West, their transcripts, and West's 100-page autobiography *I Was Loved By An Angel*, written in Winslow Green Prison, Birmingham.

Douglas French, the MP for Gloucester, asked Mr Major: "Do you not find such a deal ex-

tremely distasteful?" Mr Major replied: "Personally, I share your feelings." He was speaking as it emerged that Rose West, who is being tried for the murders of 10 women and young girls, will get a half-share in the proceeds of the book and any other profits from the sale.

Leo Gooley, her solicitor, said yesterday that she had not renounced a share in the profits although she had signed an affidavit saying that she would not keep any of the profits but give them to her children. The solicitor added that about £60,000 had already been used in legal fees for the Official Solicitor and Taylor Joynson Garrett, the top City firm which he has hired to advise on copyright.

Mr Gooley said that Mrs West was entitled to keep the 132 tapes of police interviews. These could be extremely valuable – and even auctioned to the highest bidder.

Jury at Crownhill Street, page 5

Howard safe as Labour fails to draw blood

DONALD MACINTYRE

Political Editor

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, last night survived a Commons onslaught against his sacking of Derek Lewis, Director General of the Prison Service, with a skilful counter-attack on Tony Blair for allowing himself to be used as the "vehicle for the spleen of a bitter man".

After one of the rowdiest and most bitter Commons debates since the Westland Helicopter row in 1986, Mr Howard not only predictably secured the backing of the Commons in last night's 280-221 vote but also delighted Tory backbenchers with a robust Parliamentary performance which helped to secure his tenure at the Home Office.

The Home Secretary's victory was secured at the price of publishing the official minute of a meeting on January 10 which

refused to answer questions from Mr Straw and Mr Blair on whether Mr Lewis had objected to the transfer on that day and had been overruled by the Home Secretary. The allegation, repeated on *Channel Four News* by Mr Lewis, is in the writ

of the Home Secretary is not merely secure in his job; after days of being muttered about by Tory MPs as a liability, he has become their hero'

– Andrew Man, page 2

Straw, argued had proved that Mr Howard interfered far more actively in operational matters than he had so far admitted, says he plans to sack Andrei Kozyrev, his Foreign Minister, as soon as he can find a replacement. Russian hardliners have accused Mr Kozyrev of selling out to the West.

Mr Howard also repeatedly

which has issued against Mr Howard for breach of contract.

But Mr Howard's highly unusual decision to publish the previously classified minute of the January 10 meeting and to make an unashamed defence of his right under the Prison Framework Agreement to be consulted on such operational matters, went a long way to shooting Labour's foot after Mr Straw failed to draw blood in his

repeatedly interrupted speech.

Mr Straw was jeered by the Tory benches when he declined to answer a question no whether he supported the decision to sack Mr Lewis after the Learmonth report.

Mr Howard steered the debate away from the details of his encounters with Mr Lewis to the safer, wider territory of

Tory law and order policy, and told the Commons: "I have

been accused of intervening. Yes

I have. I make an apology for it.

I intervened to cut back home leave by 50 per cent. As a direct result, home leave failures have fallen by 80 per cent."

Mr Howard said Mr Blair and his sidekick Mr Straw have shown themselves utterly unfit for government. I invite this House to reject them and their motion with the utter contempt it deserves."

Second resignation, page 2

Leading article, page 20

COMMENT

News analysis: The Astbury Siamese twins – a story of hope, sadness andousy luck. Page 19

Polly Toynbee: The Pill is still a woman's best friend. Page 21

Helen Wilkinson: wonders whether black women can really wait for their menfolk to sort themselves out. Page 21

Another view: the Chief Scout defends the memory of Lord Baden-Powell. Page 20

Wilkes's diary: Major's heir-apparent. Page 19

Weather: Southern regions will be bright at first but rainy later. Northern regions will have showers to start but will clear up later. Scotland will be fine but cold. Section Two, page 33

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Siamese twins die

Cloie and Nicole Astbury, the Siamese twins who were born joined from chest to navel, died yesterday, just days after doctors discussed the possibility of their going home. The twins died within five minutes of each other after they succumbed to bowel disease. Page 8

Equality prescribed for men

The Government bowed to a European Court equal rights ruling yesterday by giving free prescriptions to men at 60, the same age as women, at a cost of £40m a year. Ministers rejected the option of raising women's age of entitlement to 65 and avoiding spending the money. Page 15

Trafalgar hits back

Trafalgar House, the embattled owner of the Q.E2, attacked rumours that its largest shareholder was poised to withdraw support following a collapse in its shares in recent days. Page 22

Kozyrev faces sack

Boris Yeltsin, struggling to shore up his presidency, said he plans to sack Andrei Kozyrev, his Foreign Minister, as soon as he can find a replacement. Russian hardliners have accused Mr Kozyrev of selling out to the West. Page 14

Robbery gang foiled

Italy has cancelled a decree under which terminally ill criminals are immune to prosecution. The ruling ends the exploits of a band of AIDS-infected Tunisian bank-robbers. Page 14

sections: TRAVEL, GARDENING, CROSSWORD 32, GAZETTE 16, LETTERS 24, NEWS 27, FEATURES 28-33, UNIT TRUSTS 28

section TWO

ARTS 9,10 CHESS 33 CLASSICAL MUSIC 14-16 CROSSWORD 33 FIT FOR LIFE 8 LIFE 45 LISTINGS 18-25 REVIEWS 10 POP MUSIC 11-14 TELEVISION & RADIO 24-35 WEATHER 33

ONE

news

Jails controversy: Non-executive director quits in protest at Lewis sacking but Howard passes Commons test

Prison Board hit by new resignation

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A second member of the Prison Service's management team yesterday quit in protest over the sacking of Derek Lewis, the director-general.

Urmila Banerjee told the Home Secretary she thought the dismissal of Mr Lewis was not in the best interest of the service and nor did she agree with many of the recommendations in the Learmont inquiry into the escape from Parkhurst prison, which led to his sacking.

The resignation from the

Prison Board of Mrs Banerjee, a director of British Telecom, came as Judge Stephen Timmins, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, described the Learmont report as "flawed and dangerous". The judge said the report's primary conclusion that security should override all other penal policy considerations was "quite wrong".

The current Prison Service statement places security alongside humanity and rehabilitation. But Sir John Learmont has concluded that custody must come before consideration of care and control. Judge Timmins

said: "I strongly disapprove of placing security above humanity. What kind of message is that giving to those in the service? It is extremely dangerous. Would it mean that anything was justified to stop someone going over the wall?"

The departure of Mrs Banerjee follows the protest resignation on Wednesday of Geoffrey Keays, a director of the Prudential insurance company. And a question mark hangs over the future of a third – and arguably most influential member – Sir Duncan Nichol, the former chief executive of the NHS.

Angry letters fired off last week by Sir Duncan – reprinted here – warned the Home Secretary that to sack Mr Lewis would be "severely damaging" to the service. He also questions the "bias" of the Learmont findings and says its summary of his involvement is a "serious distortion".

Sir Duncan is currently working in Spain and last night was not available for comment.

The fourth non-executive board member, Bill Bentley, has said he will not resign but he did express his support for Mr Lewis.

Their vacancies will be filled by Mr Howard who appoints all the directors of the board – the six executive, operation directors and four advisory, non-executive.

In her letter to Mr Howard, Mrs Banerjee wrote: "I am writing to advise you that, after careful consideration, I have decided to resign my position as a non-executive director of the Prisons Board. After five-and-a-half years this has not been an easy decision."

"However, as I indicated in my letter to you of October 12, I cannot support the view of the

Quartermaster General, listened too intently to the "front line troops" and believed too little credit was given in the report for change that was taking place within the service.

"That is not to say that everything was fine with the Service, and would have been if Derek Lewis had been allowed to continue for two or three more years. Fundamental problems that Mr Lewis was bequeathing to the service were a climate of fear in industrial relations and an undue emphasis upon incentives as tool of prison management," he said.

He said Sir John, the former

IN BRIEF

Murder case against mother dropped

A judge yesterday ordered two changes against a mother accused of harming two of her children who died to be dropped.

After hearing submissions from the defence, Mr Justice Garland said the charge against Celia Beckett, 34, of murdering Tracey Butler, four, and of causing grievous bodily harm to five-month-old Clare, should be dropped. Mrs Beckett, of Newark, Nottinghamshire, is still charged with manslaughter of Tracey, who was allegedly given 23 anti-depressant tablets and with child cruelty and administering a noxious substance to a third daughter, Debbie, seven. The case continues today.

Nuclear station fire

A fire broke out at a nuclear power station in Hartlepool, Cleveland. Nuclear Electric said the blaze was in a non-nuclear section of the plant, radioactive material was not involved and there had been no leak of radiation. One reactor was shut down. There were no casualties.

Military explosion

Two people were injured, one seriously, in an explosion at a military experimental establishment at West Freugh, Dumfries and Galloway, which specialises in aircraft weapons systems trials. The Defence Evaluation and Research Agency said the victims were civilian technical personnel.

Husband charged

The husband of Eve Howells, 48, who was bludgeoned to death at her home in Huddersfield on 31 August, has been charged with her murder. David Howells, 47, will appear at Huddersfield magistrates' court today. Two brothers, 14 and 15, have already been charged with her murder.

'Spectator' editor

Frank Johnson, now a deputy editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, was named as the new editor of the *Spectator* magazine, replacing Dominic Lawson who is to edit the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Poison vet appeals

Ryan James, 41, a vet who was jailed for life for poisoning his wife with horse drugs so he could start a new life with his mistress, has won leave to appeal against his murder conviction. Sandra James, 39, of Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, died last January.

Seaside evacuation

Dozens of homes were evacuated after a 1,600lb German Second World War bomb was brought ashore by a fishing boat at Hythe, Kent. Experts from the bomb disposal unit at Portsmouth defused the device.

Water firms tapped

Southern Water, Thames Water and Yorkshire Water were criticised in a report by the water companies' regulator Ofwat for the way they deal with customer complaints. They were particularly "resistant to making financial redress for anything other than actual loss or damage".

Scott photos sold

Three albums of more than 800 photographs of Captain Scott's Antarctic expedition, which ended in death in 1912, were sold for £38,250 at a Christie's auction.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	... £10.40	Nigeria	... £5.00
Belgium	... £16.80	Italy	... £4.50
Canada	... £32.00	Malta	... £32.25
Cyprus	... £51.20	Morocco	... £3.40
Denmark	... £12.18	Norway	... £6.20
Iraq	... £4.45	Spain	... £2.20
France	... £12.40	Portugal	... £2.25
Germany	... £14.50	Sweden	... £4.00
Greece	... £16.50	Switzerland	... £4.00
Luxembourg	... £19.00	USA	... £3.00

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BACK ISSUES

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The curious case of the royal bedroom

STEPHEN GOODWIN

For all Michael Howard's storming performance in yesterday's prisons crisis debate, it was a bumble backbencher, Chris Mullin, who pointed up the change in political ethics the affair seems to illustrate.

During a testy Prime Minister's Question Time preceding the debate, Mr Mullin asked if John Major recalled the occasion on which a man was found in the Queen's bedroom.

Whether or not MPs recalled Michael Fagan's Buckingham Palace intrusion on July 1982 most of them roared with laughter and there were murmurings of "Prince Philip?". But Mr Mullin, justice campaigner and Labour MP for Sunderland South, was on to a serious point.

"Does the Prime Minister recall that the then Home Secretary, Lord Whitelaw, who I think we can call a gentleman of the old school, immediately offered his resignation?"

"Was Lord Whitelaw wrong? Could he have said it was an operational matter and none of his business?"

Mr Major did not tell the House whether he recalled the man in the Queen's bedroom, but all of his replies and Mr Howard's blistering arguments were to the effect that Lord Whitelaw was indeed wrong.

The Home Secretary dismissed Labour's charge that he had pressurised Derek Lewis, the former director-general of the Prison Service, over the removal of the governor of Parkhurst as a "cheap and tawdry attempt to make petty party political capital" out of the difficulties of the service.

And he accused Tony Blair, who had again tackled Mr Major on the affair, of "allowing himself to be used as the vehicle for the spleen of a bitter man".

With help of Tory backbenchers and a poor performance by Jack Straw, his Labour opposite number, Mr Howard won the day. He was watched from one end of the public gallery by his wife, Sandra, and from the other by John Marriott, the ex-governor of Parkhurst prison.

At the close of the noisy, debate Labour's motion deplored the unwillingness of the Home Secretary to accept responsibility for serious operation failures of the Prison Service was defeated by 280 votes to 231.

Mr Straw struggled with the aid of minutes from a meeting between Mr Howard and officials in the wake of the Parkhurst escape to try and prove that Mr Howard wanted Mr Marriott suspended whereas Mr Lewis only wanted him moved.

According to the minutes, the Home Secretary "wondered whether it was right for Mr Marriott to move to another duties as distinct from being suspended from duty".

Mr Straw told the House that Mr Lewis had said he came under "intense pressure" to agree to suspension – greater than he had ever known – to change the director-general of the prison service.

Mr Straw said virtually every-

one associated with the prison service had over-riden Mr Lewis in announcing to the Commons on 10 January, following an inquiry into the Parkhurst escape, that Mr Marriott was to be moved that day.

Mr Howard repeatedly avoided challenges to say whether he had acted against Mr Lewis's advice, but eventually told the House: "The answer is no, because all the decisions that day were made by the director-general of the service. We say that in practice the Secretary of State has on numerous occasions taken decisions and otherwise interfered in the operation of the prison service."

He also maintained that Mr Lewis had over-riden Mr Lewis in announcing to the Commons on 10 January, following an inquiry into the Parkhurst escape, that Mr Marriott was to be moved that day.

Howard's pariah triumph leaves an important question about how the country is run unresolved by Parliament. The relationship between ministers and agencies has been exposed, yet again, as unacceptably vague. In essence he has got away with taking credit, but not blame, for what happens in the penal system.

His distinction between policy and operations, fought yesterday through obscure minutes and faxes, is not tenable. This is a gap in proper accountability through which ministers will continue to skip whenever things go wrong.

Meanwhile, the chartering classes have been badly beaten up by the parliamentary Conservative Party – which is after all, the story of the past 16 years.

galleries. I didn't think the Home Office officials in their box in the chamber looked too happy, either.

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Mr Straw said it was well known that Mr Howard "wanted Mr Marriott's head" and wanted to present it to the House that afternoon.

Mr Howard used the same 10 January minute to try and draw precisely the opposite conclusion to that of Mr Straw. Announcing that he was taking the exceptional step of releasing the official note, he said it showed it was Mr Lewis who decided that the governor or Parkhurst should be moved.

"I was entitled to be consulted by Mr Lewis about this

important matter, and I was,

was entitled in the course of the consultation to explore alternatives as I did." "I was not entitled to give instructions – I did not." Pressed on whether he had set a deadline for Mr Lewis, Mr Howard said he had to make a statement to the Commons that afternoon. Of course there had to be a deadline.

Cheered on by Tory backbenchers, Mr Howard had almost completed his lawless demolition of Mr Straw and Labour's case when Tony Blair

intervened, claiming Mr Howard had wanted Mr Marriott suspended and wanted it done immediately.

He challenged the Home Secretary to allow those who received the instruction to move Mr Marriott to give evidence as to what they were told by the Home Office.

But Mr Howard said the intervention cast the most serious questions on Mr Blair's judgement. "If there were any evidence required that the Labour Party is unfit to govern we have seen it here this afternoon."

The purpose of this further note is not to debate the bias of the Learmont report which understates the achievements of the Prison Service under the leadership of the Director General. ... The underlying issue is whether, speaking for the non-executive members of the Prison Board, change would be severely damaging to the future of the service. If any such changes were contemplated, we would want to meet the Secretary of State before any decision was taken, in accordance with the

Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,

Duncan

13 October

Richard Wilson

Home Office

Dear Richard,

I am writing on behalf of the non-executive members of the Prison Board who have seen the Learmont report. I am aware that the two longest serving non-executives have also written directly to the Secretary of State ...

I believe the report is a serious distortion. As my personal "balance sheet" noted, the changes needed are enormous, but beginning to come right. If Sir John's report caused any question to be raised about the future of the top management team, especially the Director General, ... The underlying issue is whether, speaking for the non-executive members of the Prison Board, change would be severely damaging to the future of the service. If any such changes were contemplated, we would want to meet the Secretary of State before any decision was taken, in accordance with the

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Dangers of the Pill: Thirty-five years since the new oral contraceptives offered freedom, experts have discovered a new peril

Women still haunted by the risk factor

LIZ HUNT

Health Editor

Thirty-five years after the oral contraceptive Pill was first linked with blood clotting, women are today facing new concerns about this potential fatal side-effect.

The anxiety of more than a million women—and their partners—will be heightened by the knowledge that the combined oral contraceptive brands implicated in this latest Pill scare, are the very ones they have been encouraged to take since the late 1980s. But three separate studies have shown that the risk of blood clot is twice that of other brands.

These Pills were said to be safer because they contained a far lower dose of oestrogen than earlier Pills—supposedly reducing the risk of blood clots. In 1988 in Britain the Dunlop Committee had established beyond doubt connection between oestrogen and clotting.

The newer "safer" brands are the product of millions of pounds of research over three decades and yet when asked yesterday why they should in fact carry an increased risk of thrombosis, Professor Michael Rawlins, chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, which has issued a warning letter to all doctors and pharmacists about them, could only answer: "We don't know. There are a number of theories..."

One theory is that the synthetic progestogens [a female hormone] in the combined Pills—either gestodene or desogestrel—makes the oestrogen component of the Pill more potent, and therefore more likely to cause clotting.

German scientists were the

first to raise concerns about gestodene, particularly in relation to a popular brand of the Pill, sold as Femodene in the UK, and available since 1987. The drug, made by Schering Health Care Limited, is taken by an estimated 400,000 British women.

Guide to the contraceptives

Women using these pills should consult their doctor before becoming pregnant again. If you are thinking of having a child, you should consider:

- The Pill
- Minipill
- Marvelon
- Monopil
- Women need to be aware of the following:
- Ovrys
- Microgynon
- Triovin
- Logynon
- Ovynette
- Brevirin
- Triovin
- Syphase
- Norimist
- Neocin

However, the incidence of blood clotting related to gestodene-containing Pills in Germany rose in 1989 and 1990. Drug companies blamed this on press and media attention, and a letter to doctors from the German Ministry of Health requesting reports on clotting incidents related to this group of Pills. This had "stimulated reporting" by doctors and, the manufacturers claimed, when publicity subsided, the adverse reporting rate returned to its pre-1989/1990 level.

But concern about Femodene continued to grow in Germany and here, particularly after a number of deaths and disabling injuries related to its use in previously healthy young women. The Department of Health, which had been aware of the German research, looked again at Femodene in 1994 but concluded there was no cause for anxiety. The message was that an unplanned pregnancy posed greater risks to a woman's health than this or related Pills.

In February this year, Sir Mootague Levine, a coroner in Southwark, south London, said he would write to the CSM, Schering, and the Department of Health urging them to give greater emphasis to possible side-effects of the Pill packets.

This followed an inquest into the death of Beverley Marsh, from Barnstaple, who died in December last year, just two days before her 21st birthday, and only two months after

ing prescribed Femodene. She suffered blood clots in the lungs. At the inquest her mother pointed out that warnings about the risk of clotting appear in tiny print on page 41 of the 51 page booklet in the Pill packet.

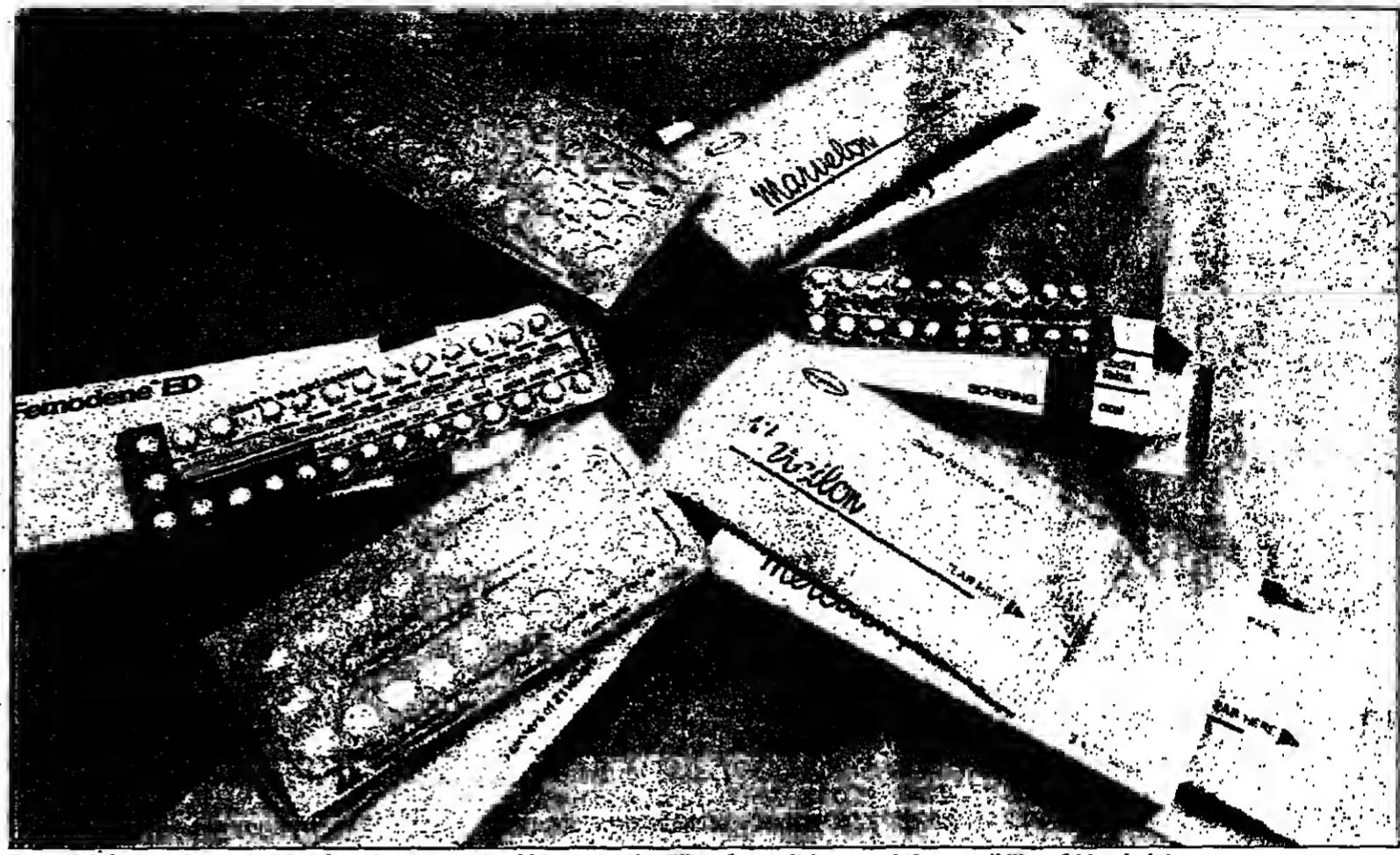
The Marsh case is one of an

estimated 45, involving relatives of women who have died after taking Femodene or suffered some injury, and are suing Schering. Other Femodene-related fatalities have include Sarah Mitchell, 18, a legal secretary from Lowestoft, who died of a blood clot blocking the main heart artery after taking the drug for three weeks. Dawn Watson, 19, and one of the first users of Femodene died in 1988.

Shortly after her death, a young mother, Terri Midgley, 18, was partially blinded by bleeding in her eye while tak-

ing Femodene. Other deaths among users of other combined pills including Minipil and Marvelon are Ann Pratt, 26, a teacher from Dudley who died in 1989, and 16-year-old Lisa Smith from Telford, who died in 1990. After the screening of a

World In Action programme in July this year on the health dangers of the Pill, the manufacturers have been writing to GPs refuting the claims made and urging them not to stop prescribing the gestodene or desogestrel-containing brands in an effort to shore up market share.



Potential danger: Lower levels of oestrogen were said to make the Pill safer as it lessened the possibility of blood clots

Fatal prescription that took a young life

Clare Garner reports on how the Pill killed a 22-year-old

Rachael Ashbrook was a healthy young woman who did not smoke, drink or have "any problems whatsoever". At 22 she was prescribed the contraceptive pill Femodene. Within four months she was dead.

At first, Rachael's family thought her sudden death was "one in a million". Yesterday's announcement confirmed it had been no freak incident.

In May 1991 Rachael went on holiday to Cornwall. After climbing St Michael's Mount she collapsed. "She appeared to be having some sort of fit," said her brother, Wayne, 35. "Passers-by tried to revive her but at one point one of them said she had died and they lost her. She stopped breathing. She was taken to Truro hospital and put on a ventilator. At this point her heart was fluctuating. She was drifting out of life and death."

The intensive care unit coo-

tacted her family. "They told us they didn't know why it had happened but that her heart had stopped beating," said Wayne.

"That was on the Sunday and by Wednesday they had taken her off the ventilator. She could breath unaided but that was all she could do. She was fed by a drip and they said she had ex-

treme brain damage."

Rachael was transferred to a hospital near her home, the Countess of Chester, in Cheshire, where she died six weeks later. An inquest concluded death was caused by pulmonary embolism.

It was only then that the truth started to emerge. "There is no history of heart problems in the family," said Wayne. "There was no connection made with the Pill until afterwards when the consultant at the hospital wrote to my mother to explain

things. His exact words were that death was almost certainly contributed to by usage of the Pill. My sister's GP told my mother had she not been on the Pill she would be alive today."

Rachael had just started a job as an office clerk at a packaging company in the Wirral. Previously she had studied business at Chester College. "Everybody who knew her liked her. She was beautiful, intelligent and sensible. She had a strong sense of justice and fairness. If she felt someone had been wronged she would campaign on their behalf," said Wayne.

Rachael's mother, Sylvia, 60, broke down when she heard the Government's announcement yesterday. "I can't say that the news brings everything back because it's never away from us. It's a daily thing. I feel bitter that Rachael's life was cut off at such

an early age but we've done everything we can to stop that Pill and save other girls' lives."

"Just because the company was making money it wouldn't listen to ordinary people. If there was any doubt about the Pill it should have been banned immediately."

When Mrs Ashbrook looks at Lorraine, her younger daughter, she sees aspects of Rachael. Lorraine is now the age that Rachael was when she died.

Last year a Bradford-based solicitor, Rosalie Houghtoo, who represents similar cases, contacted the Ashbrook family. It was too long after Rachael's death to take legal action but all they wanted was to get the drug off the market.

"We had been given the impression that Rachael's death was one in a million. We didn't realise there were so many sim-

ilar cases and that seemingly it was this type of Pill that was doing it. The evidence is overwhelming," said Wayne.

After her death Rachael's mother kept all her possessions, including her bag from her final holiday. She did not go through them because it would have been too upsetting.

"When Wayne raised the question of which Pill Rachael had taken I was able to take out the Femodene," said Mrs Ashbrook. "Obviously it was a nightmare at first. Eventually it has turned to anger."

In August Schering, the company that makes Femodene, were represented on a *World In Action* inquiry into the scandal.

"To hear the Schering man coming on television saying he has no qualms about the Pill being safe and then the news today makes you angry," said Mrs Ashbrook. "It's very frustrating. It finally reached a pitch when



Wayne Ashbrook: "Rachael was beautiful and sensible" they could no longer ignore it but in that time more women have lost their lives."

Rachael Ashbrook: Collapsed weeks after going on Pill

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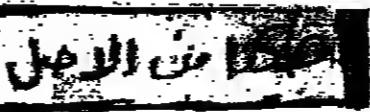
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The West trial: As jurors visit alleged murder scene, publishers cast doubt on value of biography Silent jury visits Cromwell Street

WILL BENNETT

The jury which will decide whether Rosemary West is guilty of murder walked in silence yesterday through 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, where the remains of nine of her alleged victims were found.

The eight men and four women moved in single file through the rooms where Mrs West and her husband Frederick lived for 22 years and where the prosecution alleges that they terrorised victims. Outside, neighbours hung out of their windows to try to see what was happening and journalists gathered on the pavements as they had done in February last year when the Cromwell Street murder inquiry began.

Mrs West, 41, is charged with murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street and at the Wests' previous home in Gloucester. She denies the charges. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on 1 January.

The prosecution alleges that seven of the victims were gagged, tied up and kept alive while they were sexually abused. They were mutilated and dismembered before being buried at 25 Cromwell Street.

The jury had unanimously agreed to travel from Winchester, where the trial is taking place, to Gloucester to look at the house. Mr Justice Mantell



Grim duty: The Jury arrives at 25 Cromwell Street yesterday, shielded from public view

Photograph: John Voss

agreed to their request despite misgivings about the trip.

The judge feared that because the house is small the jury would not be able to view it simultaneously. There was also concern that jurors might be photographed. Before they left

Winchester in a coach in which the curtains were kept drawn by police motorcyclists and a patrol car.

The jury's bus drove straight into the rear entrance to Cromwell Street and into a huge marquee which had been erected to cover the garden and the alley to one side of the

house. It shielded the jurors from television cameras and three helicopters hovering overhead.

Sergeant Peter Maund, a search expert, took 20 minutes to guide the jury through the house, starting at the top and moving down to the cellar.

Earlier this week the judge granted leave for Mrs West to be excused from going to the house. Richard Ferguson QC, defending, had told the court: "It was for many years the family home and it would be unduly distressing."

Both No 25 and No 23 next door lie empty. A campaign to buy and demolish them and create a memorial garden has already raised £13,000.

A bouquet of carnations and roses lay outside No 25 yesterday. It was from Ann Marie Davis, Mr West's daughter by his first marriage who told the court on Wednesday that her father and stepmother had repeatedly sexually abused her.

It commemorated Heather West, the couple's eldest daughter whose remains were the first to be found at Cromwell Street and said: "Though the years have passed you are always in my heart." Heather would have been 25 last Tuesday.

The trial resumes at Winchester today.

Fred West film rights may be sold for estate

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Reporter

The Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, who commissioned the official biography of Fred West on behalf of the estate of the Gloucester builder, will have to consider whether to sell the tapes of the police interviews.

The estate also contains the valuable asset of the film rights in Fred West's handwritten autobiography, entitled *I Was Loved By An Angel*, which could be sold to Hollywood for a substantial sum.

Mr Harris is acting on behalf of West's children and is required to "maximise" profits of the dead man's estate. West

hanged himself in Winson Green prison, Birmingham, on New Year's Day without making a will. Any money accruing from the estate will go to his wife, Rosemary - who has said she will not keep the money - and to his eight surviving children.

It is not clear whether Mr Harris intends to brave what would undoubtedly be a public outcry by selling the film rights or the 132 police tapes which are Rosemary West's property under inheritance laws.

However, according to statements he has made regarding his duty to make as much money from the estate as possible, he may feel obliged to do so.

One of the prime assets of the estate has been assumed to be West's autobiography, but publishers who were offered the chance to publish the "official" biography yesterday threw doubt on its value.

The promise of exclusive access to the 100-page memoir was a key selling point in the controversial deal brokered by Mr Harris, for which Hodder Headline agreed to pay a "six-figure sum" - possibly about £250,000 - two weeks ago.

But a publisher who turned down the chance to buy the biography, to be written by the former *Times* journalist Geoffrey Wansell, said: "One wasn't going to be allowed to see any

of the material which Fred West had written, but I understood it to be very illiterate."

She said she asked the literary agency whether the manuscript dealt specifically with the alleged killings, and was told that it did not, but it "described the women he had known in his life - his mother, sisters and his first wife."

She had turned down the opportunity to bid also because she felt "uncomfortable" about the whole project. Her first reaction had been, she said: "Why on earth is the Official Solicitor trying to make a great deal of money out of this?"

Peter Gross, of the publishers Peter Gross Ltd, also ex-

pressed the opinion that *I Was Loved By An Angel* was unlikely to illuminate Fred West's life.

The publisher who is bringing out his own first-person book about the case, written by Stephen and Mac West, two of Fred's children, said: "I am astonished that the autobiography is being put forward as a valuable literary document. The letters by Fred West I have read are rambling and incoherent. You practically need an interpreter to understand them."

The Gloucester builder had a very poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar, he added.

Another publisher who was offered the chance to bid said:

"It was obviously going to be the official biography. I just didn't want to get involved."

Brian Masters, the author of a biography about the killer Dennis Nilsen, and who is now working on a book about the psychology of Fred West, said he felt unable to comment on the deal.

But Virginia Hill, who is also writing a book for the *Daily Star*, said that if she had known the Official Solicitor was seeking an author "I'd have applied myself". She added: "Foly good luck to Geoffrey Wansell. I don't suppose they could have advertised in the *Guardian* - the response would have been absolutely overwhelming."

Goran was one of the first people in the former Yugoslavia to experience the nightmare of racial hatred. He never lived to tell the tale. Or did he?

Somehow you can tell just by looking at Goran that he was unlikely to be a desperado. He worked as an agricultural engineer in the small town of Vukovar, which before the conflict had a multi-ethnic population.

In November 1991, the town was overrun by Serb paramilitaries. Goran and his mother hid with other terrified townsfolk in a large cellar.

But the paramilitaries dragged them out and took them to a 'clearing centre' where people of different religions and ethnic groups were made to stand apart. And where women were separated from the men.

This heartless "selection" was the last time Goran's mother Ivanka saw her son. He was taken away in what was the first mass "disappearance" of former Yugoslavia.

Ivanka prays that her son is still alive and has tried without success to find out what became of him.

Since Goran vanished into the smoke of war, tens of thousands of other people in former Yugoslavia have simply "disappeared", leaving their families with an agony of hope and despair that can never die.

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Read his autobiography, serialised exclusively in the Independent, from this Saturday

news

Equal rights: Ministers forced to comply with European directive after pensioner's two-year legal struggle

Men to get free prescriptions at 60

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

The Government bowed to a European Court equal rights ruling yesterday by giving free prescriptions to men at 60 – the same age as for women – at a cost of £40m a year.

Ministers had the choice of raising women's age of entitlement to 65, but decided not to risk the electoral unpopularity.

Gerry Malone, the Health Minister, told the Commons he was complying completely with yesterday's ruling: there would be a further £10m to pay claims retrospectively over the last three months. Men can apply for their free prescriptions and refunds from today.

According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, the state retirement age is now academic for many people; half of men are not in full employment when they reach 65.

The judgment upholds a 1979 European directive on sex equality and fuelled Tory Eurosceptics' fury over what they see as unnecessary interference in Britain's right to set its own laws.

Tony Marlow, MP for Northampton North, called the decision an outrage: "I am not aware that a decision was ever made by the British people that a decision on who should or should not get free prescriptions should be made by a bunch of foreign judges."

Yesterday's ruling was a personal victory for Cyril Richard-



Winning smile: Cyril Richardson after hearing yesterday's European Court Judgment in his case to have free prescriptions given to men at 60

Photograph: Edward Sykes

son, 66, a former college lecturer from Walsall, who took the Government to court.

Mr Richardson said he was angry that he had to wait five years longer than his wife, Evelyn, for free prescriptions.

"It seemed to me a terrible injustice and I am delighted that it has been put right," he said.

Mr Richardson, who suffers from asthma, spends £50 a year on prescriptions, which currently cost £5.25 each.

The Government had already made provision to equalise the retirement age at 65 for both men and women between 2010 and 2020, and the prescription age will go up at the same time.

The directive gave states discretion to delay equal state pensions, but the EU court ruled yesterday that the equal provision of prescriptions could not be similarly exempted, because it was not "intricately linked" to the pension age. Since the directive came into force 10 years ago, men have had to pay the prescription charge until they are 65.

The Government had co-tested Mr Richardson's case

from the start, arguing that the British prescription charges system was not covered by the European directive.

It never disputed that the national rules amounted to sex discrimination.

The trial continues today.

A MAN HAS SEX WITH A 10 YEAR OLD PROSTITUTE. WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD PAY FOR IT?

Every year hundreds of children, some as young as 10, are cautioned or charged and, in some cases, convicted of prostitution.

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MONDAY 23 OCTOBER

العنوان

Air pollution is 'not the cause of asthma epidemic'

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Air pollution is not the cause of the epidemic of asthma in adults and children, scientists said yesterday, and they warned that infections and allergens are more potent triggers of the disease.

A two-year independent inquiry has concluded that although air pollution may provoke acute asthma attacks or aggravate existing chronic disease, the effect is "generally small and... appears to be relatively unimportant" compared with other factors such as viruses, cigarette smoke, diet and house dust-mite droppings.

Professor Stephen Holgate, chairman of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air, which compiled the report, said that the strongest risk factor for asthma was allergy and this was rising across the developed world.

"The real concern to the public is the rising trend in asthma," he said. "The important questions are what is driving the increase in allergies and why do they manifest themselves as airway disease... Outdoor air pollution seems not to be a particularly important cause [of asthma]."

The committee decided that

an outbreak of asthma in July 1994, following a period of hot weather and thunderstorms, was not related to an increase in air pollution, Professor Ross Anderson, a member of the committee, said.

Every epidemic so far has been associated with greater concentration of allergens in the air. These allergens include biological pollutants such as pollen and fungal spores which were not considered by the committee, which focused instead on chemical pollutants," he said.

The inquiry team did find that pollution due to car and lorry emissions may pose an increased risk. Professor Anderson said: "People living close to streets with heavy traffic do appear to have a slightly increased risk."

Asthma has increased by an estimated 50 per cent in the last 30 years, and three million people – one million of them children – are sufferers. The disease has also increased in severity and the number of deaths from asthma has almost doubled since the 1970s to around 2,000 a year. Around 200,000 people are disabled by severe asthma.

Although asthma is regarded as a disease of urbanisation, the committee found "little or

no" association between the regional distribution of asthma and that of air pollution. A recent study from the Isle of Skye, where air pollution is believed to be minimal, showed as high a prevalence of asthma as anywhere else in the UK.

Professor Holgate said that other factors associated with urban living, such as cramped houses and poor ventilation, and lifestyle changes, particularly smoking in pregnancy, diet of the pregnant mother and diet in early life were more significant.

Dr Kenneth Calman, the chief medical officer, said that air pollution remained an important problem because it made some asthmatics worse. Government research commitment to asthma was "intense", he said.

The National Asthma Campaign (NAC), said the report highlighted the need for more research into the causes of asthma. Melinda Letts, chief executive of NAC, said: "We hope the Government will continue to take seriously the impact of traffic pollution can have on some asthma patients."

The Friends of the Earth said the report confirmed the health effects of air pollution, and urged the Government to promote alternatives to cars and lorries.



Poisonous legacy: Beckton gasworks, in east London, waiting for a £1.5m clean-up, including removal of toxic oxide

Photograph: Brian Harris

Blackspot warnings go on the Internet

DANNY PENMAN and
NICHOLAS SCHOON

Friends of the Earth has placed a register of Britain's most polluting factories, gasworks, chemical plants and refineries on the Internet.

The database covers 1,000 sites in England and Wales and is taken from the Government's pollution inspectorate's chemical releases inventory, first published last year.

Diseased gasworks, such as the site at Beckton, east London,

used in the film *Full Metal Jacket*, feature heavily, with more than 1,000 scattered around the country. Virtually all will be contaminated with substances used in the manufacture and purification of "town-gas" including various forms of cyanide, toxic heavy metals and phenolic compounds, some of which may be carcinogenic.

The sites became contaminated mainly through the purification plants which cleaned the gas. One of the worst contaminants is "Blue Billy", or

spent oxide. This material, often dumped on site, absorbed most of the noxious components in the gas.

Beckton is one of the most contaminated sites. Part of it has

been redeveloped as a housing estate while the remainder is still owned by British Gas.

Debbie Tomlin, who lives on

part of the redeveloped site, says

she, her husband and two chil-

dren all suffered from illnesses

and skin rashes caused by con-

tamination. "We've had soil

tests done in our own garden

and at other places around the

site. The bits that were conta-

minated they removed and they

removed the soil from eight gar-

dens," she said.

British Gas has made strenuous efforts to decontaminate the worst sites and reclaim the

rest for housing and industry but

they have been left frequently

with a highly toxic legacy. They

have done comprehensive sur-

veys on most former gas works

sites but refuse to reveal the re-

sults and claim it is commer-

cially confidential information.

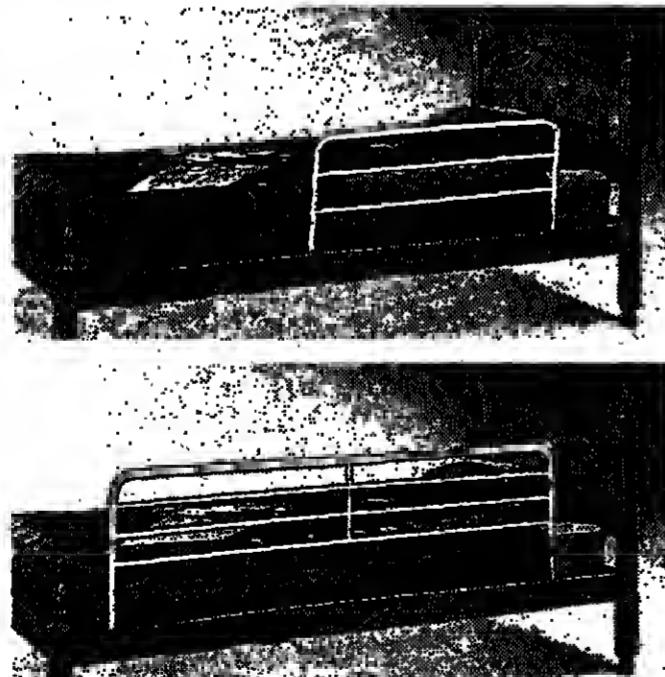
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BED GUARDS

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news

Parents devastated as Siamese twins die of bowel disease

JOJO MOYES

Chloe and Nicole Astbury, the Siamese twins who were born joined from the chest to the navel, yesterday lost their fight for life, just days after doctors discussed the possibility of their going home.

The girls, who were born at St Mary's Hospital in Manchester, died within five minutes of each other early yesterday after succumbing to bowel disease.

They had survived a life-saving operation to separate a shared bowel after their birth on 14 September. But the health of both the twins had deteriorated rapidly since the beginning of the week, when Chloe contracted the bowel disease, known as neo-natal necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), which

spread to other vital organs. Alan Dickson, the consultant who had been treating them, said at a press conference yesterday: "The effects of the disease spread to both children. They had been going downhill on Monday and Tuesday. They were deteriorating as we were supporting them and doing what we could."

Mr Dickson added that the twins were put on life-support systems on Tuesday night, but they died "of their own accord". Nicole died before Chloe at about 1:40am. To come through what they came through in the first 11 days of life and then to be hit with this out of the blue was extremely bad luck," he said.

Their parents Melanie and Brian Astbury, who also have a three-year-old son, had been

News Analysis, page 19

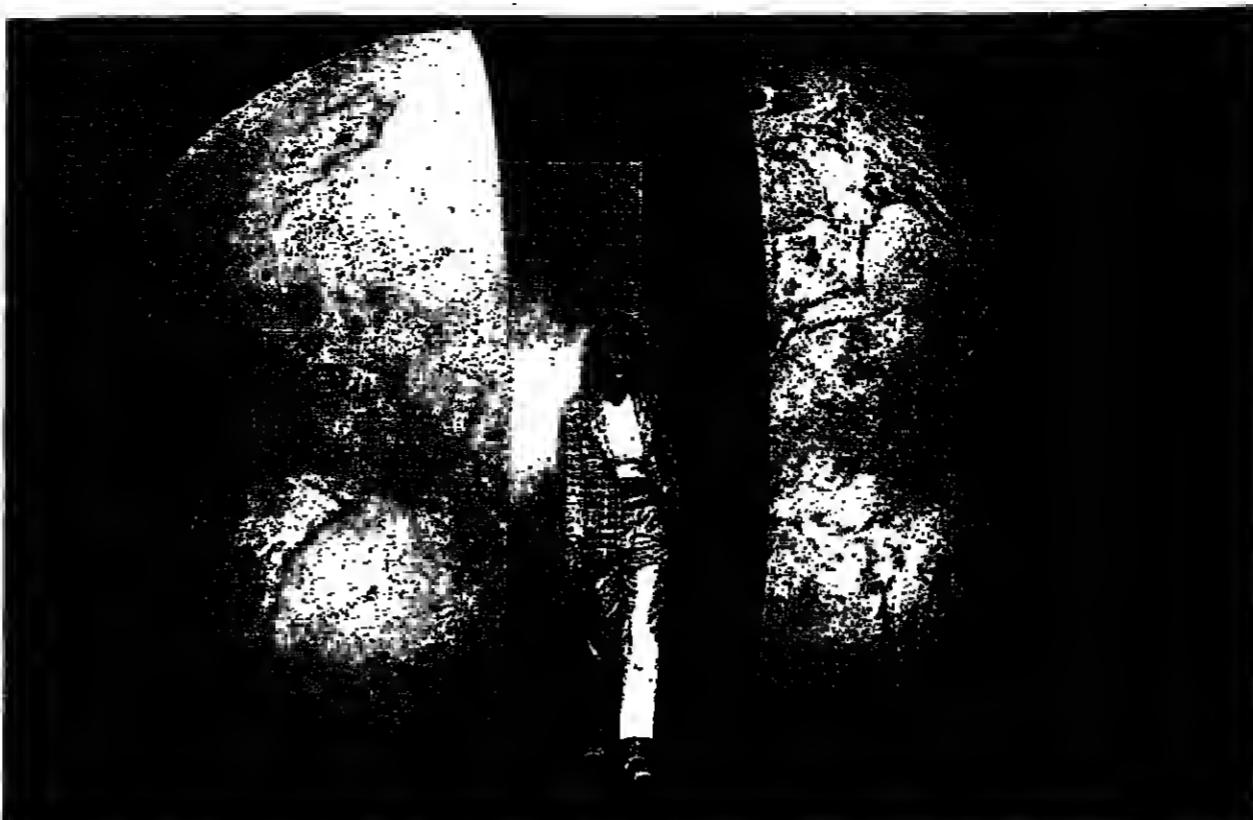
contacted at 12.45am and asked to come to the hospital. There the couple - who this week said they had "no regrets" about having the twins - were told that the girls would not live. Such was their shock and distress, Mr Dickson said, that they were unable to go in and say goodbye to their daughters.

"Melanie and Brian were full of hope and this turn of events was totally unexpected for them both," said Andrea McWatt, the couple's solicitor. "As you can imagine they are both devastated."

Until they contracted the bowel disease, doctors said the twins' progress had been "remarkable". Last week doctors had discussed with their parents the possibility of the twins being discharged from hospital.

News Analysis, page 19

Claudia's explosive entry lifts Chanel show



Show stopper: A huge globe opens to reveal Claudia Schiffer yesterday in Paris

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

TAMIN BLANCHARD
Paris

Security was stepped up yesterday morning at the Chanel show for Karl Lagerfeld's spring/summer '96 collection at the purpose-built catwalk theatre under the Carrousel du Louvre, Paris, after rumours of a bomb threat.

The celebrity count has been low this season because of the security checks and general tension in the city, following the recent wave of bombings.

Valentino, who has dressed Emma Thompson, Jamie Lee Curtis and Sharon Stone presented his collection after Yves Saint Laurent on Wednesday with not even Joan Collins seated on the front row. Madonna turned up for Helmut Lang and John Galliano, neither of whom showed at the obvious terrorist target of the central Paris Carrousel du Louvre.

Chanel was rumoured to be a target because it is the best known fashion house in Paris. But the only hint of an explosion came when the huge globe at the end of the catwalk split in two to reveal Claudia Schiffer in a cloud of dry ice.

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Short takes on transport as Meacher is sidelined

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES and JOHN RENTOUX

Tony Blair took his revenge on Labour traditionalists yesterday, propelling the Shadow Cabinet newcomer Clare Short into the transport portfolio and sidelining her predecessor Michael Meacher after the backlash against new Labour in Wednesday's elections.

In what could be a protracted reshuffle, the Labour leader also set about a clear-out of front bench middle and lower ranks. Nine had reportedly been sacked or resigned last night in advance of an announcement on the junior posts today.

And another wave of "new Labour" appointments is expected over the weekend. Five of the 1992 intake currently serving as whips – Peter Mandelson, Barbara Roche, Estelle Morris, Geoff Hoon and Stephen Byers – will be promoted to junior shadow ministerial jobs.

Formerly in the vanguard of the "soft" left, Ms Short, the MP for Birmingham Ladywood, played a prominent role in the dumping of the left-winger Liz Davies as parliamentary candidate for Leeds North East. Mr Blair has rewarded her handsomely with the transport portfolio. She will handle the delicate task of defining what Labour means by its pledge to take the railways back into public ownership. Mr Meacher, her predecessor, was judged to have taken his definition too far.

Appearing in brackets under David Blunkett in the shadow cabinet list released last night, Mr Meacher will be shadow employment secretary while Mr Blunkett will take the lead role of shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment. The slap in the face will be

compounded by Mr Blair's expected decision to give responsibility for preparations for the minimum wage to a junior shadow minister under Mr Meacher; Ian McCartney. Mr Meacher, who was said to have turned down an alternative offer of shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, will be left with responsibility for unemployment figures, training and health and safety.

Wednesday's Shadow Cabinet elections saw Jack Cunningham, former shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, knocked off and Tom Clarke, a spokesman on disabled people's rights who lost his place last year, reinstated against the odds. There were also increased votes for Mr Meacher, Joan Lestor and Ann Taylor, while shadow Welsh Secretary Ron Davies rocketed from twelfth to fourth place. But none have secured promotion and Mr Blair has responded to the rebuff to Mr Cunningham by giving him the national heritage portfolio.

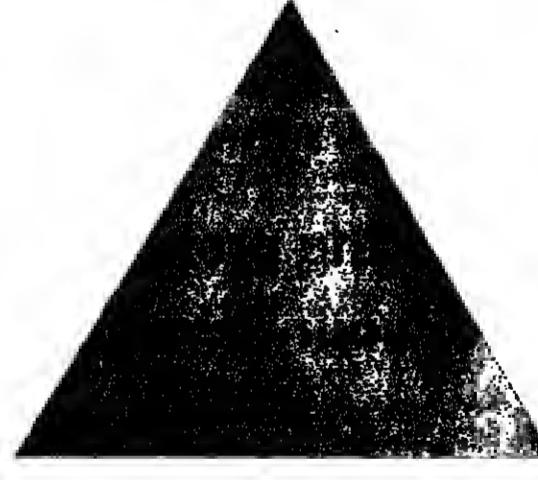
Mr Cunningham, Derek Foster, formerly chief whip and now shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Andrew Smith, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, will be invited to attend Shadow Cabinet meetings on a regular basis.

Other high-level changes were confirmed yesterday. Margaret Beckett, who topped the poll, will take over trade and industry, while Harriet Harman, the former employment shadow, will take over the health portfolio from Mrs Beckett. Chris Smith, formerly national heritage, takes over the key social security portfolio from Donald Dewar, who becomes chief whip.

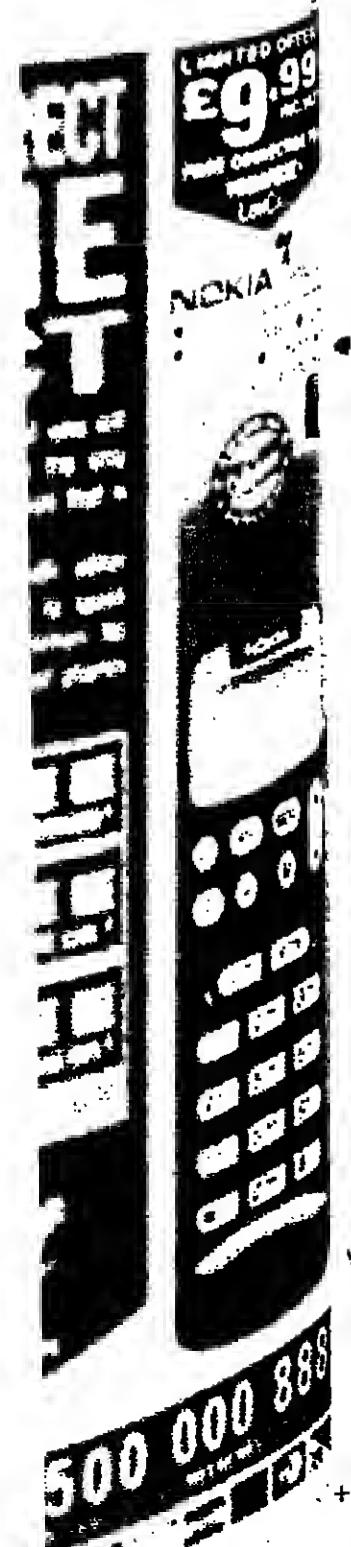
Tessa Jowell becomes spokesperson on women.



Downpour.



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news

Secret trade: MPs raise questions about transfusion service practices as commercial exploitation of volunteers is denied

Turks profit from British blood donors

LOUISE JURY
London
and HUGH POPE
Istanbul

Products made from freely donated blood in Britain are on sale abroad at huge profits.

A Turkish price list seen by the *Independent* provides the first evidence that money is being made out of blood provided by British volunteers, despite denials by the National Blood Authority (NBA), which runs the service.

The authority has claimed repeatedly that there is no commercial exploitation. Its blood products are sold overseas only occasionally, when there are surpluses, and to recover costs.

But the Turkish price list shows that the consumer price of the British-made Factor VIII, a clotting agent used for treating haemophiliacs, is four times the UK price, in a business operation which donors have not been consulted on.

At least part of the difference is understood to go to the Turkish government, which imposes a 10 per cent import tax, and in profits for the businessmen responsible for importing, storing and transporting the product.

Osmang Karaomeroglu of Sodan Medical Instruments Manufacturing and Trading Company, the licensed distributor for the British products in Turkey, said it was the common practice for the government to multiply the price of a foreign imported medicine two or three times.

A quantity (500 international units) produced by Bio Products Laboratory (BPL), the laboratory of the National Blood Authority, is available for £399 (31,522,748 Turkish lira)

compared to the UK price of around £90. Similar mark-ups appear on albumin, a by-product which is used to treat burns. Turkish government records show Factor VIII was exported by BPL at twice the price paid by at least some British hospitals.

Both donors and doctors expressed anger and concern yesterday. Donor Steve Goddard, 26, an Oxford University lecturer, said: "I would not be happy about the possibility of any private company making a profit."

But although she insisted the NBA made no profit itself, she admitted the authority did not have control over what profits were made overseas.

"If you are a distributor, you have to make your living."

In the Commons, Nick Brown, Labour's health spokesman, said: "This may well be standard behaviour, standard practice, for a private, profit-driven firm in a competitive marketplace, but surely it has no place in an ethically-based public service whose overriding purpose is to meet the needs of patients?"

Gerry Maloof, Minister of State for Health, said: "Price-setting outside the UK has nothing to do with the NBA, and is not within the control of the Government."

But Alex Carlile, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, said: "I do not understand why the National Blood Authority cannot establish in its contracts of sale enforceable conditions to ensure that does not happen."

"It is quite normal for international contracts to contain restrictive conditions on what should happen to the product that is sold. It happens regularly with regard to defence material and I do not see why it should not happen in relation to blood."

"Most people don't realise it, or of a government, particularly one with human rights record like Turkey, taking a large whack. And I think it would put people off donating blood." Some donors have already withdrawn in protest.

Dr Paul Giangrande, a consultant haematologist who treats haemophiliacs, said: "If there is material left over, it comes from volunteer donors and it should be given, not sold."

"Most people don't realise

that even here, blood is being traded as a commodity internally within the NHS market. I have to buy blood products."



Taking it lying down: Donors have been dismayed to learn that their blood may have been used for export

Photograph: Andy Hall

Anger at deliberate use of 'surplus'

Louise Jury reports on a moral and economic dilemma

The Nuffield Council of Bioethics, which examines ethical questions in biological research, came out this year against commercial dealings in human blood. "What is freely given by donors should not be used to make a profit," it concluded.

Although subsidising UK supplies by selling surplus blood and blood products was not ruled out, it did not address the question of what happens to those surpluses when sold.

For the donors, that is the heart of the matter. Pauline Swan, 44, from Oxford, said: "I don't think that any donor in this country would be giving up their time to make profits for somebody else abroad."

Until recently, most donors did not know they were. They are still not routinely asked whether they might object. Mrs

Swan said she had only recently discovered where her blood went. "I've always assumed it's gone for use in this country."

But in the House of Commons last December, the Government admitted that sales had been taking place since before 1986 to recover costs.

As concern grew at this revelation, the National Blood Authority repeatedly stated: "Our charges are set at the level required to recover our costs. No profit is involved."

But the implications of the commercial sales operation were not explained to donors and many have become angered to discover an overseas mark-up.

Mrs Swan, a medical personnel worker, said she believed the assumption

donors was that surpluses would go to health professionals, outpatients, added: "It's just totally unacceptable the way they are going about it."

And Dr Paul Giangrande, a consultant haematologist, said the National Blood Authority was disingenuous in arguing that the alternative to sales was destroying blood. Any excess should be given free to countries who needed it, out those who could pay, he said.

Two-thirds of the world's 180,000 haemophiliacs receive no treatment and many of BPL's rival pharmaceutical companies donate supplies to developing nations through the World Federation of Haemophiliacs.

Sue Kilroe, 33, a founder of the Merseyside and North Wales Patients and Donors Association, added: "It's just totally unacceptable the way they are going about it."

Blood service insiders claim that as sales began around a decade ago, surpluses could not have occurred by chance and commercial gain must have been in mind when the blood was collected, even if only to satisfy the Department of Health's demands that the service is self-financing.

One service worker said: "In these circumstances, there was a duty to give prior warning to donors that by-products of their blood might be sold."

An NBA spokesman explained whole blood was very rarely used, but parts – red cells, platelets and plasma products – were used as appropriate.

High demand in England and Wales for red blood cells has left plasma unused. If this was not sold, the NBA could not balance its books, as required by the Department of Health. But it did not believe people in Turkey would pay the full list price.

Turkey has to import blood products as it does not make them itself and regulations governing pharmaceutical products like Factor VIII mean they have to go through a licensed distributor, the spokesman said.

Asked why these arrangements had not been explained to donors, he asked: "Is there really a necessity to?"

Tessa Jowell, a Labour health spokeswoman, said: "I don't think there's necessarily any reason to assume that donors would object, but they ought to be told."

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Computer chips theft 'costing UK £1bn a year'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Theft of computer memory chips has reached "epidemic proportions" and is "escalating out of control" with the trade in stolen parts now worth £200m a year, the police and electronics manufacturers revealed yesterday.

Criminals are targeting manufacturers, wholesalers, and companies - including a break-in at Scotland Yard offices - to steal the chips which, because of a world shortage, are now more valuable by weight than gold.

Insurers estimate that the total cost of replacing the chips, carrying out repairs and replacing all the lost information stored in the stolen memory banks is more than £1bn a year.

The police and the private sector joined together yesterday in launching a new campaign to tackle the escalating problem.

Memory chips, also known as RAM (random access memory), are essential for computers to operate. They can be sold to small businesses looking for a cheap way to upgrade their systems, or to second-hand dealers. The police also have anecdotal evidence that some of the chips are being sold in the Far East and eastern Europe, where they are recycled and fitted into new models.

The computer thieves prise open the computers and remove the chips, which are stored on plastic boards or "SIMM boards". On a large model the chips cost about £700 and are worth about half that second-hand.

At present most manufacturers do not individually tag chips so they are virtually untraceable.

Inquiries made by the National Criminal Intelligence Service during the past year found that in some areas of Britain thefts of chips had shot up. In the

Midlands they have risen by 74 per cent on last year.

In just two operations earlier this year in London 70 people were arrested and £1.5m of stolen computer components were recovered.

In one recent incident criminals broke into the Metropolitan Police's property services division in Tintagel House, central London, where Scotland Yard's complaints bureau is based, and stole chips from computers. IBM, the computer manufacturer, had £1.5m worth of memory chips stolen in one raid last year at a supplier in the west of Scotland.

John Almonds, director of security at BT, which has suffered a series of break-ins, said the problem was first identified last summer and reached "epidemic proportions" at the beginning of this year. "This is continuing unabated," he said.

Commander Tom Williamson, of the Metropolitan Police, said: "The chips are worth more, weight for weight, than industrial diamonds or gold. Criminals have realised that computer chips are easy to steal, have a value much higher than other stolen goods and cannot be easily traced. These three components make computer chip theft a very attractive proposition to criminals."

Among the crime initiatives being introduced and tested by manufacturers and the police are special computers that automatically shut down if the chips are tampered with along with better alarm systems, bar-coding or tagging each chip board, and spraying the computers with special water that has a unique coding that can be identified on criminals in a similar way to DNA. However, the police said that until computer users insisted on better security measures the manufacturers would continue largely to ignore the problem.

Angry skaters plan legal fight over park ban

JOHN MCKIE

Britain's main skating organisation is considering legal action against the ban on park skating - known more often as rollerblading - in all but two of London's royal parks.

The British Inline Skating Association (Bisa) is furious that the Royal Parks Agency has banned skating in four parks in London - Regent's Park, St James's Park, Green Park and Greenwich Park - and restricted its practice in the two remaining royal parks, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.

The Royal Parks Agency took action last Wednesday after a coroner's inquest into the accidental death of Mark Welch, a 26-year-old cyclist, who collided with a skater in June.

On 5 October the coroner, Dr Paul Knapman, criticised the Royal Parks' "spineless acquiescence to minority groups". By last weekend, notices were up on the four parks banning the sport. It has an estimated 500,000 devotees in Britain and is the fastest-growing sport in the UK.

Bisa's spokeswoman, Davina Weir-Wilfords, said yesterday: "We have been taking legal

advice. Lawyers have told us the RPA has to go to the Secretary of State and the ban isn't enforceable for six months. They can't enforce it and should they arrest someone there's no by-law for that person to be prosecuted. We are trying to get them to change their minds and accommodate rights for sensible skaters."

Bisa is angry that the RPA has rushed through the ban and gritted surfaces in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Skaters have been organising a petition of 1,000 signatures aiming to reverse the decision. The majority of signatures are from professionals over 40. They plan to continue skating but royal park authorities have warned that persistent offenders face arrest.

Tom Corby, a Royal Parks Agency spokesman, said it was acting within its legal rights. "Our role is to manage the parks for the benefit of all park users. We have not changed the regulations of the park [which would require permission from the Secretary of State]. We have just introduced new arrangements for rollerbladers. As I understand it, we have the power to do that."

DAILY POEM

Miss Zhou Drops a Bombshell

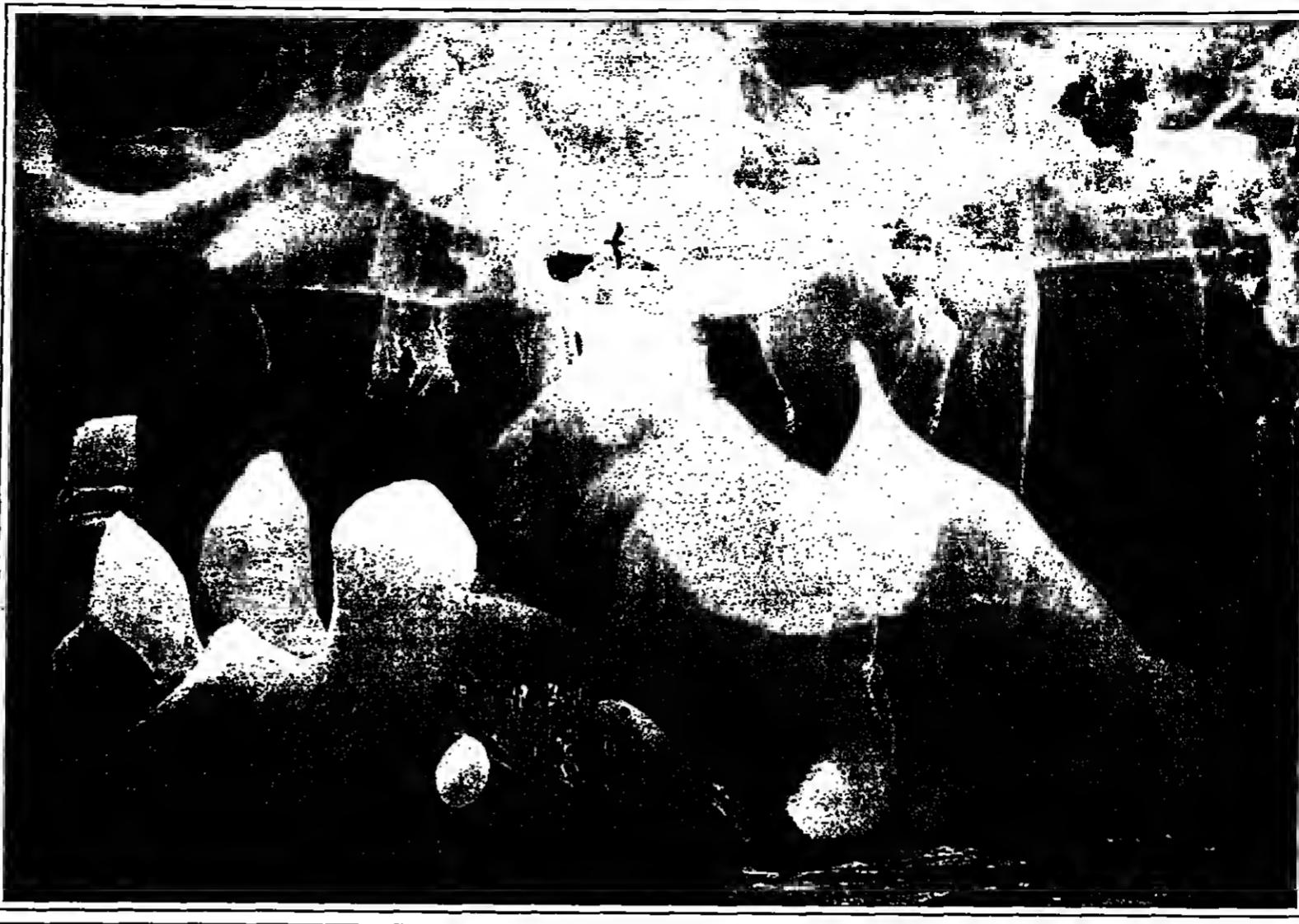
By Sarah Lawson

"You may not believe this," she says,
Challenging me to imagine -
Pausing to let me prepare myself -

"But
Not everyone
in China
Has

A television set."
The bathos leaves me speechless
But she reads it
As shock at deprivation.

Sarah Lawson was born in Indianapolis in 1943 and has lived in London since 1969. In 1991 she went to teach at Suzhou University in Jiangsu Province in China, from which a cycle of poems, *Down Where the Willow Is Washing Her Hair*, this poem among them, emerged. Her poetry has appeared in *Poetry Introduction 6* (Faber) and numerous magazines and anthologies. The collection is published by Hearing Eye (Box 1, 99 Torrington Avenue, London NW5 2RX) at £3.

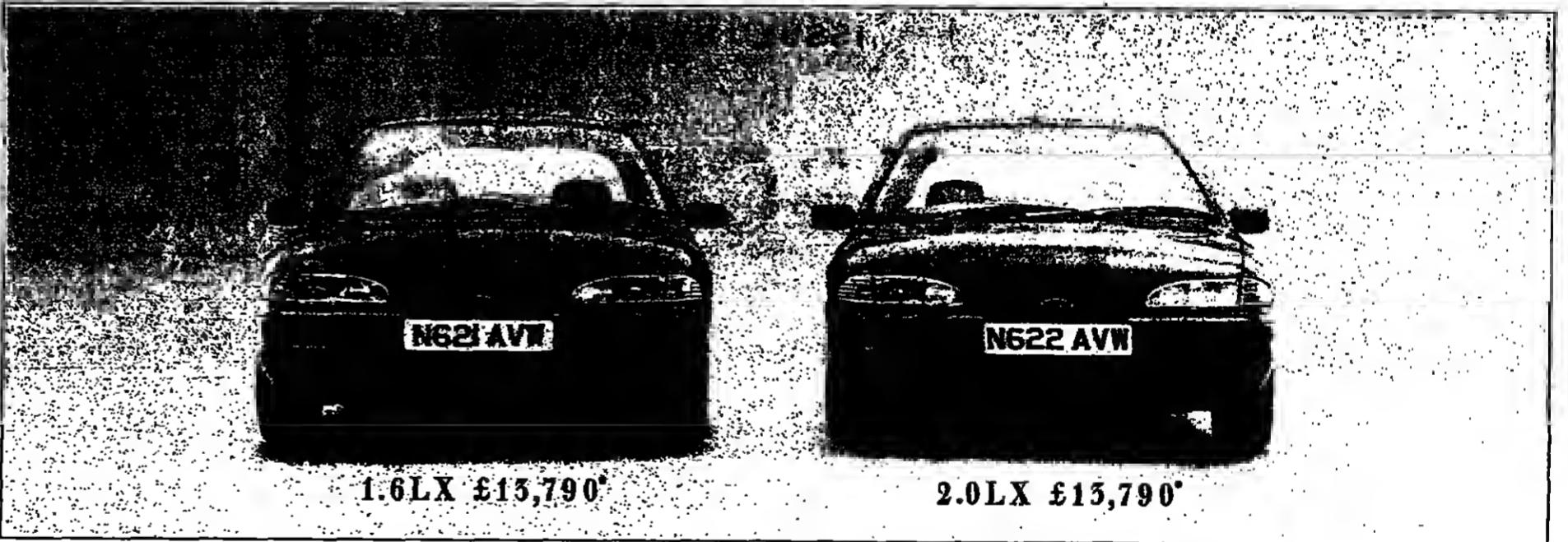


Natural talent
of a Briton
earns reward



This stunning picture of a blue iceberg in Antarctica, left, has clinched the British Gas Wildlife Photographer of the Year award for Cherry Alexander. Mrs Alexander, from Sturminster Newton, Dorset, is the first British woman to win the competition, which is organised by BBC Wildlife Magazine and the Natural History Museum. Mrs Alexander, pictured above, who collected the award yesterday, said: "Blue icebergs are thought to consist of ancient compressed ice that absorbs all the light except blue, and they are very rare."

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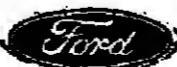
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In the balance: Willy Claes, whose future as Nato Secretary-General rested last night with the Belgian parliament

Belgian MPs set to seal fate of Claes

SARAH HELM
Brussels

The future of Willy Claes, the Nato Secretary-General, looked bleak last night as the Belgian parliament met to debate whether he should stand trial on charges of fraud and corruption.

Despite his attempt to win the parliament round with a personal address, all early indications suggested that the vote would go against Mr Claes, which would almost certainly bring about his resignation, possibly as early as today.

The race for the succession has already narrowed down to two finalists: Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, the former Danish foreign minister, and Ruud Lubbers, the former Dutch Prime Minister. Britain has no particular preference, according to diplomatic sources in London, but views neither candidate as particularly outstanding.

As the dramatic parliamentary hearing got under way, ambassadors at Nato headquarters were holding key meetings with Russia in the absence of their Secretary-General, whom they were able to watch on television arriving at the Belgian parliament, flanked by his lawyers. Some of the alliance leaders were trying hard to play down the clear embarrassment, suggesting that there was still some hope that the parliament would not send Mr Claes for trial, and he could continue in his Nato job.

However, whatever supportive sentiments were being expressed in Washington, London, Paris or Bonn, it was clear last night that Mr Claes's fate rested solely in the hands of the Belgian parliament, where the vote was likely to be influenced as much by party politics and personal point-scoring as by impartial assessment of the evidence.

Before the 150-member lower house was the recommendation of the parliamentary commission, which examined the evidence against Mr Claes and called on the full parliament to lift his immunity from prosecution, a privilege bestowed on all Belgian ministers and for-

mer ministers. Mr Claes stands accused of knowing about money paid to the Flemish Socialist Party in 1988, when he was economics minister, by Agusta, the Italian defence contractor.

The prosecution evidence against Mr Claes is apparently not overwhelming, but repeated inconsistencies in his testimony are likely to be enough to bring him to trial.

Only the Flemish Socialists, who are part of Belgium's coalition government, were last night expected to vote in favour of Mr Claes, but this minority support would be nothing like enough to save him. Even some younger Socialists were thought likely to vote against their former minister, on the grounds that it is time to clean up the image of the party. Mr Claes has recently ruined any hope of winning votes from Christian Democrats, the second party in the government, following a row with the party in its local area of Limburg.

Commentators said last night that Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Prime Minister, and leader of the Christian Democrats, would want to lance the "Agusta boil" from the Belgian political scene by encouraging his party to vote to send Mr Claes for trial. Mr Claes's resignation would trigger swift consultations among the alliance about his successor. Foreign ministers meeting in New York for the 50th anniversary of the United Nations will probably take the decision this weekend.

According to Nato sources, only Mr Ellemann-Jensen and Mr Lubbers are considered serious contenders.

The post carries a high degree of administrative work but only limited political clout, and is not sought after by high-flying politicians from big European countries. Under Nato rules the United States always takes the job of Nato military commander, while the Europeans occupy the bureaucratic hot-seat.

The Willy Claes affair

6 Dec 1988	The Belgian coalition government agrees to buy Grumman helicopters from Agusta, the Italian aircraft contractor. Willy Claes, then Belgian foreign minister, is implicated.
6 Jul 1991	André Gide, a French Socialist minister of state, is shot dead by a lone assassin during a hunger strike of 10 days. The killer, who had been Mr Claes' principal adviser, says Mr Claes ordered him to do it but reveals he was acting "at the behest of Agusta to the detriment of the Belgian public".
6 Feb 1993	Frank Vandenbroucke, then Belgian foreign minister, admits he ordered a stash fund for the French socialist group to be destroyed. He admits the fund cost \$12,000 to be burnt.
6 Jan 1994	André Gide, now a Granada House MP, is formally questioned for the first time by the Cour de Cassation, Belgium's highest court. He says: "I see no reason to resign". He does, however, admit an "error of judgement".
6 May 1995	Jacques Verl, the public prosecutor at the Cour de Cassation, sends a secret report on the Agusta affair to the Belgian parliament. A Belgian law granting immunity to ministers and senior civil servants means that only parliament can send Mr Claes for trial. A committee is set up to advise parliament on what to do.
6 Oct 1995	Olivier Et is revealed that the Verl report recommends that Mr Claes should be tried on charges of corruption, forgery and fraud. Mr Claes protests his innocence.
October 13-14	Mr Claes appears before the committee, which recommends that Parliament should order a trial.
October 19	The full Belgian parliament hears evidence from Mr Claes and Verl about whether to send him for trial.
	Guy Ooms

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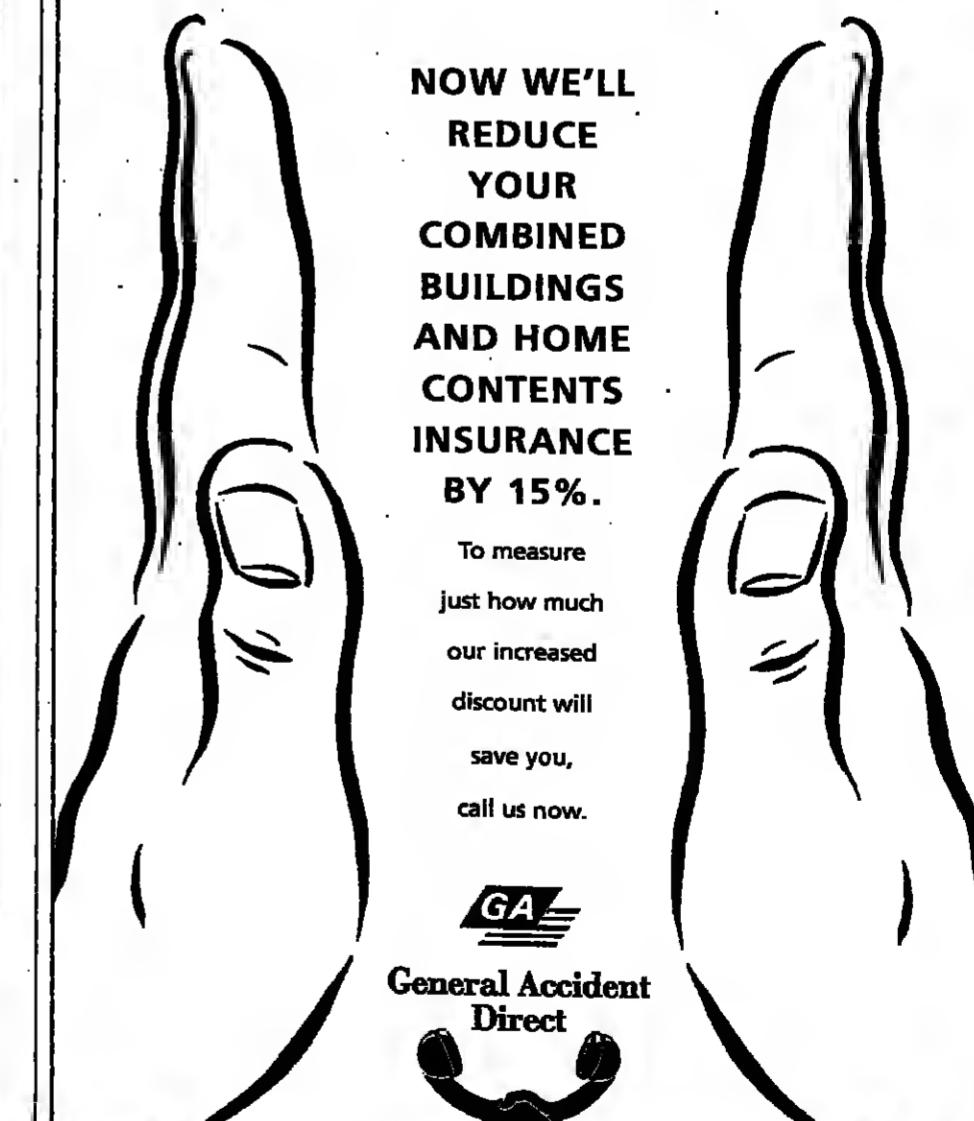
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international

Balkan turmoil: Croats pledge not to launch assault on East Slavonia after US warning □ New hope for besieged Muslim town



Face of suffering: An old woman stands in a doorway in Gorazde. After four years under Serb siege, the inhabitants hope a route will be reopened to Sarajevo

Gorazde prays for a road to freedom

"Welcome in free Gorazde," the official said — although it's more a state of mind than a fair description of the last government-held enclave in eastern Bosnia — the kind of place to which Sarajevo send food parcels, and where a good time means hanging out by the bridge in the watery autumn sunshine.

For the first time since the war closed in on Gorazde in the spring of 1992, a crack has opened in the Serb armour around the enclave, with the planned opening to civilian traffic of the main road to Sarajevo, 60 miles away.

Over the past few days peacekeepers and aid workers have made cautious forays past glowing Serb check-points; yesterday's convoy included the US ambassador to Bosnia, John Menzies.

Swarms of children tear across the fields at the edge of town, just beyond the last Serb barrier, calling for sweets and giggling at the spectacle. Their elders are less demanding but friendly, smiling until they weep for the past. Under the ceasefire brokered by the US envoy, Richard Hulbrooke, the residents of Gorazde should be free to travel (under UN escort) to Sarajevo. No one we met is ready to risk that journey, but everyone hopes it will improve life in the enclave.

To the small covered market, prices are falling in anticipation of new goods, with traders trying to shift the second-hand boots and jeans, the half-empty bottle of shampoo, the 500g bag of salt that costs 30 German Marks, a third of the price a month ago. "Everything is cheaper because we hope everything will be better with this road," said one lean stall-holder. "We hope there will be peace, so we can go to Sarajevo — for Gorazde that will be at least a half-peace."

Most goods are home-grown: tobacco, apples, onions, leeks, read books and have babies.



Emma Daily reports on the courage of the last Muslim town left in eastern Bosnia

potatoes and honey, from villages in the enclave. They supplement the meagre aid distributed by the UN despite constant Serb attempts to block convoys. That is why children scamper about in cut-off boots, and why residents have been unable to repair the war damage.

The Serbs banned shelter materials, shoes, clothing and candles from aid convoys. They also cut water, gas, electricity supplies and telephone lines. But everywhere there are signs of the resilience that kept the enclave alive during the worst days. Under the wide modern bridge that spans the river, linking two halves of the city, hangs a plank bridge; pedestrians risk banging their heads on the metal struts of the main structure, but are shielded from snipers in the hills above.

The river below streams through improvised water wheels that generate the only electricity in the city. Each provides enough power to run a radiator for a few hours and perhaps a light bulb. City sounds are much reduced; no cars, engines, music, culture, no entertainment, but what the locals provide: The young wander around (now that the ceasefire has redefined the streets safe), read books and have babies.

"We want to be part of the solution and we want to be part of civilisation," Rijad Rasic, the local leader, told Mr Menzies.

For a time it seemed that Gorazde's contribution to the peace plan would be to surrender, following a suggestion that the government trade it to the Serbs for territory elsewhere. But that plan appears to have been squashed — at least according to the people there — and with the opening of the road it would be hard for the government to give it away. "Do you know how many people have given their lives for this town, and how many more are ready to do it?" Mr Rasic asked. "Is it possible? No."

Outside the battered hospital, where shells landed even as doctors struggled to tend the wounded and dying without equipment and medicine, a rocket that landed in the ground has been left as a monument to the city's suffering.

"In the first five or six months of war people died because they had no food. Many people have lost between 20 and 30kg," Dr Husni Fraso said. "And there are many psychological problems. It was enough that people had to live underground in the dark, that for four years they have not seen their families. I have a son and wife in Sarajevo, but Sarajevo is now so far, as far away as Australia."

Many of the 57,000 who live in Gorazde are refugees. Most were forced to abandon their homes when the Serbs swept through Foca, Visegrad, Rogatica and Celic.

"This is the first cigarette I've had for four years," said Hasiba Salman, 85, gazing at the cardboard box of goodies sent by her son, who lives in Sarajevo. "Just tell them that I want to come to them," she said, a few tears quickly brushed away. "I had everything before the war, and it's hard, because here I have nothing."

Court orders EU to open up

SARAH HELM
Brussels

The campaign for more openness in European decision-making won a victory in the European Court of Justice yesterday when judges ruled that the *Guardian* newspaper was wrongly denied access to important minutes.

The *Guardian* had accused the Council of Ministers of abusing the EU's freedom-of-information policy by refusing to release documents which might reveal disagreements between member states.

The ruling was welcomed in

the European Parliament, which accused the Council of taking decisions behind closed doors without allowing the parliament a chance to scrutinise the reasons. Pauline Green, leader of the Socialist group, said she would demand that the Council make a statement on the ruling before the European Parliament next week: "It's the only law-making body in the whole of the democratic works that is proceeding like that." Denmark and the Netherlands, which have criticised the secrecy of EU decision-making, welcomed the ruling.

Tudjman reins in attack

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

Croatia will not attack Eastern Slavonia, the last Serb-held area of the country, while peace talks are in progress. President Franjo Tudjman assured the US peace envoy Richard Hulbrooke yesterday.

President Tudjman's assurance followed warnings from President Bill Clinton that any action by Zagreb to recapture Eastern Slavonia could derail US-brokered peace talks on Bosnia, due to take place at Wright-Patterson air base, Ohio, at the end of the month.

Recently, Mr Tudjman has made statements similar to those he made before the capture of Krajina, and there have been suggestions Croatia may try to retake the area before the UN mandate in Croatia expires on 30 November.

But Mr Hulbrooke said he had seen on evidence Croatia was planning to attack Eastern Slavonia, following its victories in Krajina in August. "I am assured 90,000 Croatian troops have been demobilised and there's been some shifting around of units," he said. "I do not view that as military activity directed at Eastern Slavonia."

Meanwhile, the mystery of the two French airmen shot down over Bosnian Serb territory on 30 August during Nato strikes deepened after the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, said they had been abducted from hospital by "persons unknown", an allegation dismissed as "grotesque" by the French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette.

French sources fear they could be pawns in a power game between Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, and Mr Karadzic, who claimed the pilots might have been kidnapped by a rebel Serb group or by Muslims. "The longer time goes by the more worrying this

affair becomes," a French official said yesterday. "They could be dead and Karadzic could be belatedly trying to cover it up."

In Sarajevo it was confirmed that two Bosnian Serb journalists detained by government forces last month are dead. The Bosnian Serb news agency reported on Wednesday that the two Serb journalists had been killed in prison.

■ Washington — President Clinton said that he was confident Congress would ultimately back his plan to send up to 20,000 US troops to help implement a peace agreement in Bosnia. Reuter reports.

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international

Embattled Chirac calls off visit to US

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

Reinforcing the impression of crisis and uncertainty at the top of the French administration, President Jacques Chirac has called off an official visit to the United States planned for early November, citing "convenience and time". The visit is to be rescheduled for February.

The President's trip to the UN General Assembly in New York next week, including his controversial meeting with his Algerian counterpart, Liamine Zeroual, will go ahead. But the postponement of his first state visit to Washington sends disturbing signals. No national leader, even a determined Gaulist like Mr Chirac, cancels an engagement with the world's only superpower without some consideration of the diplomatic cost.

News of the postponement,

announced first in Washington but requested by Paris, came hours after an opinion poll had shown the ratings of the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, reaching a new low. In a telling detail, French commentators did not stress that Mr Juppé's popularity had fallen to 29 per cent, but said that it had almost reached the depths plumbed by Edith Cresson, the Socialist prime minister whose brief tenure at the Matignon made her a byword for political disaster. Mrs Cresson, now an EU Commissioner, had an approval rating of 28 per cent immediately before her dismissal.

Mr Chirac's poll rating stands at around 35 per cent. The decline in his popularity and that of the Prime Minister are without precedent for a new French administration. And while few now suggest that Mr Juppé's job

over his subsidised Paris flat — the polls add another piece to a picture which looks ever more gloomy for the five-month-old Chirac/Juppé leadership.

Ahead, French diplomacy is suffering from the resumption of nuclear testing last month and will continue to suffer until the series has been completed. Mr Chirac's decision to meet the Algerian leader in New York, whether or not it provoked the latest Paris bomb attack, has caused controversy in France and Algeria. In the words of one French commentator: "Politics is a matter of symbols: Mr Chirac has been unfortunate in the case of nuclear policy, clumsy in the case of Algeria."

At home, each successive political ruction causes the value of the franc to judder. There is undisguised scorn for Mr Juppé's escape from legal investigation and despair over

the authorities' failure to halt the bombings. The Interior Minister, Jean-Louis Debré, has come in for special flak from the public, the police and, behind the scenes, from the judiciary, for ineffectiveness, naivety and indiscretion. Even the wisdom of imposing the national-security alert, which has put troops on the streets, is being questioned.

If this were not enough, the government has in the last two days faced stiff opposition from a usually supine National Assembly to its budget proposals — opposition which has come more from within the Gaullist-led coalition than from the left-wing opposition. By yesterday evening, MPs had forced an extra 480 francs (£50m) in public-spending cuts, restored some of the tax advantages of life-insurance policies and caused a rethink on housing and old-age benefit payments.



Out of this world: Workers label food for astronauts in Moscow yesterday at Russia's only space-food plant, as it struggles to survive a cashflow crisis which threatens closure within a year. Photograph: Alexander Netruskin/Reuters

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Italy in crisis as minister refuses to quit

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

Italy's Justice Minister, Filippo Mancuso, whose attacks on anti-corruption magistrates have alienated public opinion, brought the temperature of political debate to boiling point yesterday when he refused to resign, despite losing a confidence vote in the Senate.

The 74-year-old career jurist caused turmoil in the upper house by inveighing against President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and the Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, accusing them of conspiring to protect the magistrates at all costs.

His speech split the political spectrum in two, with the conservative coalition of the former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, cheering him on and the centre-left outraged about what they saw as sneers.

The vote against Mr Mancuso was carried by 173 votes to three, but left the country in an impasse, as the constitution makes it virtually impossible to remove ministers. Either the government must now resign or President Scalfaro will have to remove Mr Mancuso from office. Either course could precipitate early elections.

The Mancuso affair has forced Italians to decide whether the anti-corruption drive that toppled the old political order in Italy was an attempt to clean up public life, or a kind of coup, which flouted every rule in the judicial rule-book, to serve specific political interests.

The debate has been sharpened by Mr Berlusconi's own experience. Accused of bribing tax inspectors investigating his Fininvest business empire, he has been ordered to stand trial next January — a trial he describes as a witch-hunt to prevent him from returning to

the prime minister's office he occupied last year.

Mr Mancuso has his own reasons for despising the judiciary. He believes the "Clean Hands" anti-corruption team in Milan have extracted confessions under duress and have leaked key documents to the press, abusing the confidentiality of their office.

Yesterday he claimed President Scalfaro had pressured him into halting inspections into the work of the Milan magistrates. Mr Mancuso also accused Mr Dini of bad faith by first going along with his policies and then withdrawing support. Mr Dini did not attend the confidence debate, but said he would not respond to such "provocations".

He accused Mr Mancuso of failing to respect the collegiality of the government. Mr Mancuso's main failing is his approach. Instead of trying to reform the system, he has tried to punish individual magistrates — unsuccessfully, as his inspection teams keep absolving them of wrong-doing. And, instead of working with the government, he has denounced Mr Dini as "servile". Now he has been discredited but he still refuses to resign. He has become a oocman embarrassment to Italian democracy, eloquent proof that the system still needs reform.



Mancuso: Despises judiciary

Robbers lose acquired immunity to justice

Rome — Italy's constitutional court has put an end to the antics of a band of Turin robbers who for the past few months have held up dozens of banks and got away with it because they have Aids, and are therefore immune to prosecution, writes Andrew Gamble.

The court cancelled a special decree passed three years ago which ruled that terminally ill criminals could not be kept in jail. Judges will now have to use discretion to decide whether or not to prosecute Aids patients for their misdeeds.

The 1992 decree was supposed to be a humanitarian gesture, but ended up exposing the whole Italian legal system to ridicule when the Turin gang — all heroin addicts infected by shared needles — earned notoriety over the summer.

They would repeatedly enter small banks in the Turin area, threaten staff and customers with a knife and walk out moments later with their pockets and coats stuffed with cash. The police got so used to catching them and then releasing them again that they ended up on first-name terms.

One of the gang leaders is now in hospital recovering from a lung infection, while the other two are living at home. They say their robberies were partly intended as a protest against the lack of facilities for people in

their position. Italy offers almost no specialised medical care for Aids patients.

Italy's asylums and mental hospitals were closed down in one fell swoop in the late 1970s in a rushed attempt to end the inhumane conditions there, and nothing has taken their place. Social workers and magistrates agree that jail is not a satisfactory alternative, since conditions are often crude and unsanitary.

They have called for a rapid infusion of state cash to provide hospices for Aids sufferers.

The constitutional court ruling was quickly denounced by the bandits, who said that they would have no chance of receiving appropriate treatment if they were sent to jail. "You'll see, plenty of people in my condition will commit suicide rather than go back to prison," said Sergio Magnis, 29, from his hospital bed.

"How can they think of putting someone like me in a cell with other prisoners? Here everyone wears gloves and a face mask. Will they give the same things to the other inmates, or will they let them get infected and die?"

The president of the constitutional court, Vincenzo Cianciello, acknowledged that the problem of inadequate treatment remained, but insisted it was a matter for the prison administration.

لبنان

international

Yeltsin to throw Kozyrev to the nationalist wolves

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin sought to shore up his struggling presidency yesterday by revealing that he plans to sack Andrei Kozyrev, his Foreign Minister and one of his most loyal allies, as soon as he can find a replacement.

It was the latest of several attacks on his increasingly powerless minister in an attempt to appease Russia's nationalists and other hardliners who accuse Mr Kozyrev of selling out to the West, particularly over Bosnia, and have long demanded his resignation.

With the Communists threatening to sweep parliamentary elections in December, and a presidential race in June, Mr Yeltsin's actions were clearly intended to try to improve his own dismal low popularity-ratings by decrying a figure who is widely scorned at home.

As political savagings go, it was nasty, making it hard to believe that Mr Kozyrev can last much longer. According to Mr Yeltsin, the Foreign Minister could not get on with other ministers, and had failed to co-ordinate his policy with the government.

The only reason he had not replaced him was because he had not found someone else to do the job. "Let him continue working," the President said. "Let us not make him knuckle under. But my decision will stay." Today the two men are due to visit Paris, where they will meet President Jacques Chirac.

If and when it happens, Mr Kozyrev's departure will cause some concern in the West, although little surprise. His demise has been predicted in Moscow almost weekly ever since he got the job in 1990. But it is questionable how much difference it will make to Russian foreign policy, if any, no matter who replaces him.

The liberally inclined Mr Kozyrev has been derided as the West's "Mr Yes" — as opposed to the Soviet foreign minister, Andrii Gromyko, the "Mr No" of the Cold War. But recently

he has sounded less pro-Western and increasingly nationalist. The major points of disagreement with the West — Nato enlargement, the bombing of the Serbs, and the inclusion of Russian troops in a peace-keeping force in Bosnia — seem likely to drag on, not least because Mr Yeltsin himself has been dictating foreign policy of late. Moreover, the West has shown little willingness to compromise, no matter how loudly Russia protests.

Mr Yeltsin seemed to signal that in broad terms Russia would maintain its relationship with the West. He also made a frank admission that the war in Chechnya had been a mistake, a point that Western governments have been making since the conflict began 10 months ago. "So many people have been killed there," he said. "This is the biggest disappointment of my entire presidency."

He talked hopefully about reaching an agreement with President Bill Clinton during his forthcoming trip to the United States over the possible deployment of nuclear weapons near the Russian border if Nato expands into Eastern Europe. He was determined to keep the US-Russian relationship on track; and President Clinton "got on too well" to let it deteriorate, he said.

The scent of ministerial blood yesterday set off speculation over who might succeed Mr Kozyrev. Among the names mooted was Vladimir Lukin, head of the State Duma's (lower house) foreign affairs committee, who has criticised Mr Kozyrev for incompetence. A more probable candidate is Anatoly Adamishin, Russia's ambassador to London.

Mr Adamishin was summoned recently to discuss the Balkan conflict with Mr Yeltsin while the President was on holiday on the Black Sea, giving rise to suggestions that he might be destined for higher office (and supplying more evidence that Mr Kozyrev was doomed). Earlier this month he wrote an article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*

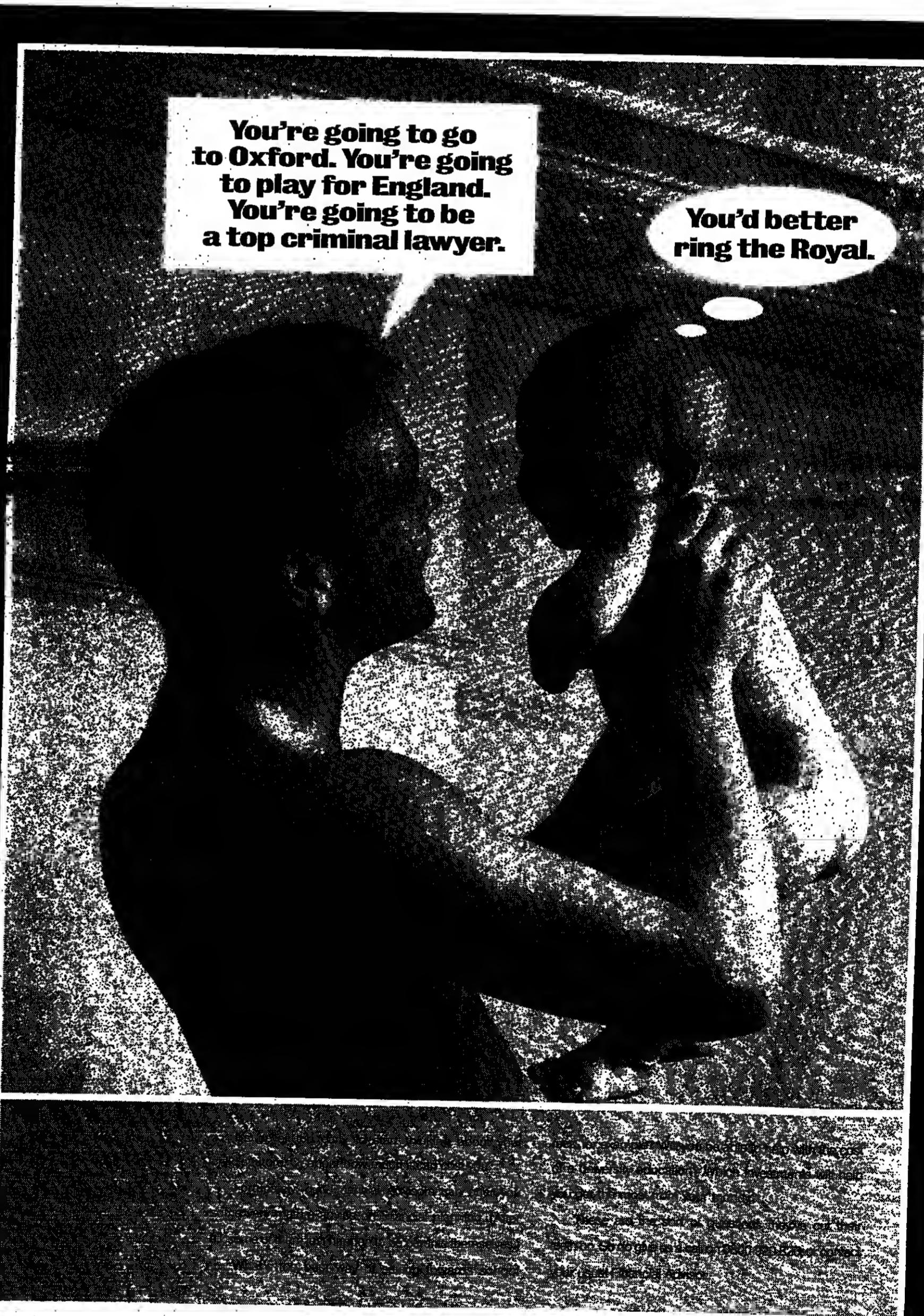


Facing the sack: Mr Kozyrev, the Foreign Minister, making a point to Russian MPs

Photograph: Alexander Natruskin/Reuter

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IN BRIEF

Palestinian exiles may find refuge in Syria

Nicosia — Most of the 650 Palestinians stranded aboard the ferry *Courtesy M* in the Mediterranean after Libya deported them should be on their way to Syria soon, the Cypriot government said yesterday. But the Interior Minister, Dinos Michaelides, stressed Cyprus would not take in the remaining passengers, who do not have Syrian documents. Libya ordered 30,000 Palestinians to leave in August to stress Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's opposition to accords between Israel and the Palestinians. AP

Muslim group 'behind unrest in Libya'

Cairo — A previously unknown Muslim group has claimed responsibility for unrest in Libya earlier this year and said it was moving its war to topple Colonel Muammar Gaddafi into the open. The Fighting Islamic Group in Libya said it was the duty of all Libyan Muslims to topple Gaddafi and impose Islamic law. Reuter

Maoris win biggest compensation deal

Wellington — Parliament has approved the biggest compensation deal yet with indigenous tribes who lost vast tracts of territory to British colonisers in 1863. Only a fraction of the land will be handed back to Maoris in the Waikato region on the North Island but the government will apologise for the seizure. AP

Failed suicide

New York — The actress Mary Tyler Moore (left) says in her new autobiography that she tried to help her cancer-stricken brother commit suicide by feeding him ice cream laced with pain-killing drugs. But she says in the book, *After All*, that her brother, John Moore, 47, lived three more months before dying in his sleep. He had stashed hundreds of pills in his home. Reuter

Mexicans jailed for assassination plot

Mexico City — A judge sentenced three people to up to 18 years for their role in last year's assassination of Francisco Ruiz Massieu, secretary-general of Mexico's governing Institutional Revolutionary Party. Irvin Anthony Dorrego and Jose Ramirez Arauz were each sentenced to 18 years for the premeditated murder, while Maria Eugenia Ramirez Arauz was sentenced to four years and six months on firearms charges. Reuter

Macedonian president leaves hospital

Skopje — President Kiro Gligorov of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been released from hospital, where he was treated for severe injuries after a car bombing on 3 October. He lost his right eye in the attack. No progress has been reported in the investigation of the car-bombing. AP

Zambia halts investigation into Kaunda

Lusaka — The Zambian government has dropped its investigation into whether the former president, Kenneth Kaunda, ruled the country illegally as a Malawian for six years. State radio quoted the Home Affairs Minister, Chitalu Sampa, as saying he had told police to halt their investigation. Reuter

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Behind bars: A prisoner serving a life sentence looks out from his cell in the former death row of Pretoria's maximum-security prison. Since the abolition of capital punishment the block has housed violent criminals.

Photograph: John Moore/AP

SA serial killer suspect caught

MICHAEL RODDY
Reuters

Pretoria — South African police yesterday shot and arrested Moses Sithole, 31, the man they had named as the prime suspect in the serial killings of at least 40 women, some of whom were lured to their deaths by letters and telephone calls.

According to police, Mr Sithole may have used his previous job as a youth counsellor to ensnare women before raping and strangling them with their underwear. He was cornered in a slum district of Johannesburg on Wednesday night after detectives received a tip-off that he was going to see a relative.

When he was confronted, police said, he attacked two undercover investigators with an axe. They fired two warning shots and then shot him first in the foot and in the stomach when he did not stop. The police commissioner, George Fivaz, said Mr Sithole was in satisfactory condition in hospital.

"This was a person who has been sought for many weeks for the killings of many persons and up to now we can't determine how he may react," Mr Fivaz added, defending the police.

who were criticised for having shot dead a previous suspect, David Selepe. Last week they named Mr Sithole, believed also to be an ex-convict, as their prime suspect. They published his picture, a list of his known aliases and appealed to people not to exact mob justice if he was found.

The serial killings are part of a crime wave rocking South Africa. The bodies of the black women victims were found near railway stations, in open fields and in mine dumps.

The commissioner did not rule out links between Mr Sithole and the previous suspect, Selepe. "All indications are that he worked as a loner over the last couple of months ... [but] there are indications that he could be linked with David Selepe," Mr Fivaz said.

Mr Sithole may have been the man who called two Johannesburg newspapers claiming to be the serial killer. In one of the calls the man claimed to have killed up to 76 people.

Mr Fivaz said precautions would be taken to ensure the prisoner's safety and he would stand trial as soon as possible. President Nelson Mandela had congratulated the detective team for their work, he said.

Syria's ally stays on in Beirut

ROBERT FISK
Beirut



Elias Hrawi: Term extended

"For the benefit of a third party," as Beirut's *L'Orient Le Jour* discreetly reported, Lebanon's 128-member parliament voted yesterday to tinker with the country's constitution and give President Elias Hrawi another three years in office.

The "third party", of course, was Syria, for whom Mr Hrawi — whose supposedly unextendable six-year term of office should be drawing to a close — has been a loyal, indeed a dutiful ally. And no fewer than 110 legislators voted to amend the Article 49 of the constitution once they learned that President Assad of Syria wanted his faithful associate to remain. So at least we now know who runs Lebanon.

In the French mandate parliament of building on the old front line, the men who say they believe in Lebanese democracy — all but a few — voted to give Mr Hrawi a one-off extension to his presidency in order that he could continue Middle East peace negotiations and the election of Lebanon's post-civil war recovery. It was, to put it mildly, a foregone conclusion.

Keeping Mr Hrawi in the presidential palace at Baabda means that the billionaire Rafiq Hariri will remain as prime minister to oversee the \$1.8bn (£1bn) reconstruction programme and maintain the value of the hard-pressed Lebanese pound. Mr Hariri was the first to congratulate Mr Hrawi on his extraordinary good fortune.

But there were, as they say, dissenting voices. The elderly and unwell former prime minister, Selim el-Hoss, grimly reminded parliamentarians that they had been able to elect presidents five times during the "darkest circumstances" of the 1975-90 civil war — without changing the constitution.

Nassif Lahoud, a former Lebanese ambassador to Washington, who has presidential aspirations, described Mr Hrawi's three-year extension as "a blow to ... democracy". Mikhael

Washington — President Bill Clinton yesterday vowed he would veto Congressional tax and health-care reform plans, presenting himself as the last line of defence against an extremist Republican party. It is a strategy which has already given him the initiative in the looming showdown with Congress over the federal budget, and could become a winning formula for his 1996 re-election campaign.

Technically, the moment of budgetary reckoning is still three weeks off. But after a brief flirtation with compromise, the Democratic White House and the Republican majority on Capitol Hill are back on collision course, playing a game of financial chicken which, if neither side yields, could shut down the government and even lead the US into a debt default.

The battle is unfolding on two fronts: the clutch of spending bills for the year 1995-96 which began on 1 October, and a mammoth overall "reconciliation" bill laying out the detailed tax and spending cuts to meet the Republicans' goal of bal-

ancing the budget by 2002. All must be on Mr Clinton's desk by 13 November, when the current stop-gap bill authorising government spending expires.

But internal Republican disputes, the leisurely procedures of the Senate and the sheer number of bills to be passed make it unlikely that deadline any longer can be met. Increasingly the Republicans are bogged down in legislative detail, and yesterday Mr Clinton said only three of the 13 spending bills had been finished.

But the real budget wars are over taxes and Medicare, the federal health-care scheme for the elderly, which the Republicans want to cut back by \$270bn (£168bn) over the next seven years. The plan was expected to be approved by the House last night, but its fate in the Senate is unclear. The same goes for the \$245bn (£150bn) tax-cut package, which Mr Clinton says conceals a \$43bn

increase in the US government's \$4,900bn (£3,060bn) debt ceiling conditional on Mr Clinton's acceptance of the reconciliation bill in its entirety. This week the Treasury announced it was scaling back some future borrowings, but the ceiling will still be hit in mid-November. At that point, if impasse continues, the US will default on some bond redemptions, possibly throwing financial markets into turmoil.

By contrast Mr Clinton, pre-emptor of change in 1992 but now champion of the status quo, is enjoying his highest approval ratings in months, and in a presidential match-up easily beats the Senate majority leader, Bob Dole, the current leading Republican candidate.

So far the Republican leadership betrays few signs of nervousness. Dismissing Mr Clinton's protestations as "a joke", and insisting that no President would dare veto a balanced budget, Speaker Newt Gingrich says he will deliver the bills at the appointed hour.

Mr Gingrich also seems determined to make congressional approval needed for an in-

crease in the US government's \$4,900bn (£3,060bn) debt ceiling conditional on Mr Clinton's acceptance of the reconciliation bill in its entirety. This week the Treasury announced it was scaling back some future borrowings, but the ceiling will still be hit in mid-November. At that point, if impasse continues, the US will default on some bond redemptions, possibly throwing financial markets into turmoil.

But as endgame approaches, Mr Clinton holds the better cards. For one thing Republicans are divided, not least Messrs Gingrich and Dole themselves. Faced with a Clinton veto, the instinct of Republican moderates like Mr Dole would be to cut a deal.

Mr Gingrich, though, is increasingly prisoner of the radical young Republicans who entered Congress last year. He is also learning the lesson of any would-be budget balancer. As the Republican landslide last year showed, everyone wants to get rid of the deficit. As the waning popularity of the Republican Congress now proves, no one wants to pay for it.

Clinton holds budget aces

The President may turn the tables on his foes as the day of reckoning looms, writes Rupert Cornwell

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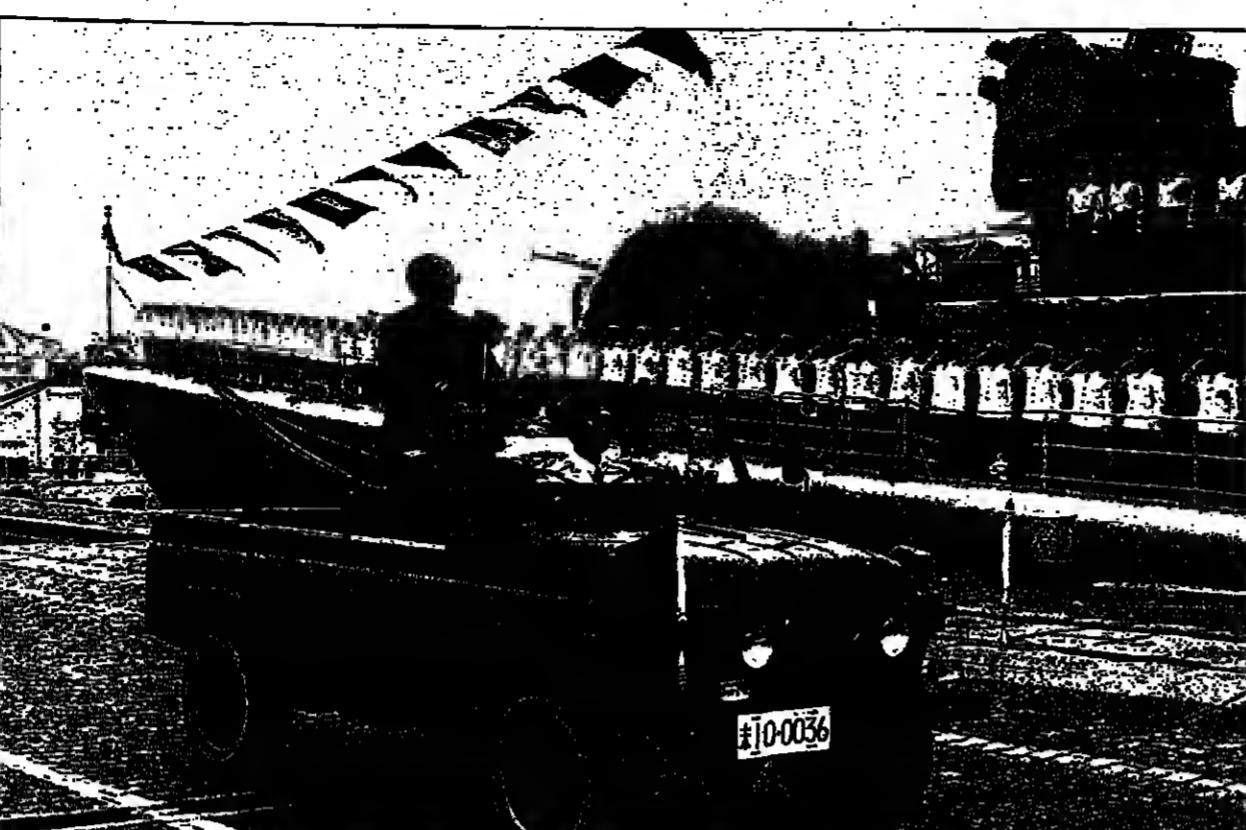
Chinese challenge: Naval exercises send tough message to US and Taiwan □ Pro-Peking body attacks Hong Kong's rights bill

Patten defends rights bill

Hong Kong (AP) — The Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, yesterday urged the people of the colony to speak out against the pro-China camp's proposal to water down freedoms enshrined in Hong Kong's Bill of Rights.

The recommendation by the legal panel of the Preliminary Working Committee, a body appointed by China to oversee the 1997 handover, shocked Hong Kong. Mr Patten warned that any move to tamper with the Bill of Rights would do "immeasurable damage". He added: "I just hope that everybody... who believes in that fundamental importance of the rule of law will stand up for it."

The legal panel said the 1991 Bill of Rights could not override the Basic Law, the constitution China has written for post-1997 Hong Kong, and that amendments bringing laws into line with the Bill of Rights should be repealed.



Show of force: A photo of Mr Jiang reviewing naval units, which was published in Chinese papers. Photograph: AP

Jiang bolsters his claim with show of military might

TERESA POOLE
Peking

When China's television broadcasts footage of President Jiang Zemin, surrounded by the new military leadership and watching naval exercises that included amphibious landings, the intended propaganda message is not subtle.

Wednesday night's pictures of Mr Jiang, seated with his commanders on the deck of a cruiser, was designed to portray a leader who can count on the military's loyalty. The footage of warships, beach landings and torpedo firings was another reminder for Taiwan of the possible consequences of moves

towards independence. And when the Chinese media highlights Mr Jiang and his recent naval manoeuvres only days before China's President is due to meet President Bill Clinton in New York, these are signals for the United States.

Firstly, Mr Jiang wants recognition as a powerful world leader (and is smarting over the US's denial of full state honours for his visit). Secondly, Washington should mind its own business over Taiwan, which is a "key issue" in Sino-US ties, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

The relationship between Mr Jiang, the People's Liberation Army and China's policy over Taiwan, provides the Chinese backdrop to next Tuesday's presidential summit.

With the ailing 91-year-old Deng Xiaoping still clinging to life, Mr Jiang is using the time to bolster good relations with the generals, an essential consideration for anyone wanting to remain president, party chief and head of the armed forces.

Last month's personnel changes, including the promotion of General Zhang Wannian and the Defence Minister, Chi Haotian, to vice-chairmen of the Central Military Commission, of which Mr Jiang is chairman, were seen as strengthening the President.

There is also the matter of appearances. The photograph (shown left) that appeared yesterday on the front pages of Chinese newspapers echoed almost identical images of Chairman Mao and Mr Deng inspecting the troops.

Now was it an accident that Mr Jiang visited the navy for his high-profile military jaunt. Sea power is becoming increasingly important, because of Taiwan

and China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. "The current situation has placed new demands on building the navy," Mr Jiang was quoted as saying.

The Taiwan challenge is one

Mr Jiang cannot afford to mishandle. In January, he stated his claim as the architect of China's Taiwan policy with an "Eight-Point Plan" for reunification.

The received wisdom among

Sinologists was that after the visit to the US in June by Taiwan's President, Lee Teng-hui, the

generals attacked the Jiang approach as too soft, and instigated a more aggressive policy.

Manoeuvres followed, including missile tests just north of Taiwan. Virulent attacks on Mr Lee appeared in the Chinese media. More manoeuvres are believed to be planned for this year, to erode Taiwanese support for Mr Lee ahead of next year's elections.

It seemed like a confusing change of tack when a US news magazine, after an interview with Mr Jiang, reported this week that he had raised the possibility of talks with the Taiwanese President. But yesterday the Foreign Ministry "clarified" the situation.

Mr Jiang's comments had been distorted, a spokesman said. The President had reiterated existing policy, which welcomes a meeting on condition it takes place under the principle of "One China"; Peking regards Mr Lee as no more than the leader of a rebellious province.

The statement sounded like the military making sure no one misunderstood the real position. In any case, Taiwan's conditions for a meeting — that Peking recognises Taiwan as an equal political entity — make such talks unlikely.

NY extends its chilly welcome to Fidel Castro

Fidel Castro will be making his third visit to the United Nations as Cuba's leader this weekend, now that his US visa has been approved. But will he have a good time in New York, the city where he honeymooned in 1943? Not if Mayor Rudolph Giuliani can help it. "I wouldn't invite him anywhere," the Mayor said. "What Fidel Castro has done to the Cuban people, including friends of mine, is an outrage of this century."

Mr Castro is to address the General Assembly on Sunday, but will be barred from a gala dinner Mr Giuliani will host, as well as a lunch at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a concert.

When he visited the UN in 1960, shortly after taking power in Havana, Mr Castro turned his back on the glitter and high prices on midtown Manhattan. After considering sleeping in a hammock in Central Park, he checked into the rundown Hotel Theresa in Harlem, when Nikita Khrushchev stopped by to see him. Barred from President Dwight Eisenhower's lunch for Latin American leaders, Mr Castro hosted his own get-together in the Theresa's coffee shop — for a dozen black hotel employees.

Argentina is crying again for Eva Peron, this time over the casting of Madonna in the title role of *Eva*, the film version of the musical long banned in Argentina. To President Carlos Menem, it is "a total and utter disgrace". Archbishop Antonio Quarracino of Buenos Aires sees it as "pornographic and blasphemous — an insult to Argentine women."

Mr Menem, a Peronist, is backing a local film, *Eva: The True Story*, which begins production in March. Starring Andrea del Boca, a soap-opera star, it will be "a film about the real Eva, not like one of those fake people who know nothing about her life have been making", he proclaimed.

The Hollywood version, directed by Alan Parker, begins production in January in Budapest. While the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical portrayed Eva as a corrupt populist who slept her way to power, the Argentine film will paint her as a champion of the masses, the saint she is to many of her compatriots.

"Eva was a pioneering feminist, not the prostitute others would have you believe,"

PEOPLE
protested Victor Bo, the Argentine film's producer. Mr Lloyd Webber found her "easily the most unpleasant character I've written about".

On his recent US lecture tour, Mikhail Gorbachev wasn't sleepless in Seattle but trouserless in Louisville. After getting caught in the rain, Mr Gorbachev sent his trousers out to be pressed while he waited in a hotel bathroom. When the trousers didn't reappear, and his speech was due to begin, the Secret Service was pressed into service to investi-



Eva Peron: A tearful issue

gate. At one point, a nervous Mr Gorbachev asked his interpreter if he could borrow his trousers. "Why wear any?" he replied. "This is America."

After another 30 minutes, the trousers were back and Mr Gorbachev emerged triumphant. After the lecture, the peckish ex-Soviet leader wanted some Kentucky Fried Chicken. The policeman who fetched a bucket of Original Recipe for size declined reimbursement. "This way, I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I bought dinner for Gorbachev," he said.

Who knows what he would have thought of *Pocahontas*, but Benito Mussolini was mad about Mickey Mouse, reports his son Romano. Mr Mussolini said his father sang Disney songs and thought *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was such a masterpiece that he wanted to see it again and again. The dictator met Walt Disney in 1935, his son said: "He took him to Villa Torlonia [his residence] and they talked about Mickey Mouse, Minnie and Donald Duck."

MARYANN BIRD

THE OMEGA FROM VAUXHALL

The Astburys were optimistic about their conjoined twins. But 'bad luck' ruined the babies' chances of survival. Jojo Moyes reports

Siamese twins: when fate steps in

All Melanie Astbury ever wanted was "normal healthy babies". She had been "deliriously happy" at the discovery she and her husband Brian were expecting twins. But this was replaced by numbness when in May this year a scan revealed those twins were joined at the stomach. "I felt my world had fallen apart," she said.

Their consultant told them the chances of twins surviving a separation were "very good" but that they had to make a choice as to whether to abort. "We walked around for a week in a total mental fog," said Brian Astbury at the time, but added: "We never seriously discussed termination ... Our babies will be born out of love into love. Everything else rests with

on the day before she was due to give birth described Melanie Astbury as "a picture of radiance in motherhood. Her eyes shine, her skin has that special glow that pregnant women have and she exudes an aura of peace and contentment..."

But elsewhere, the couple's decision to go through with the birth elicited a fierce debate. This was opened by Polly Toynbee who, in a response to the *Mail's* article, wrote a piece in this newspaper entitled "Sensitivity is not enough", in which she suggested the couple should have been encouraged to consider abortion. This brought a fierce reply from, among others, Dominic Lawson, then editor of the *Spectator* and himself the father of a daughter with Down's Syndrome, who said: "If anything could truly be described as chilling it is the mind of Polly Toynbee ... her argument is not only morally and emotionally bankrupt; it is also intellectually bankrupt."

Amid the relative peace of the maternity ward, Melanie Astbury gave birth to daughters Chloe and Nicole by Caesarean section at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, on 14 September. The first conjoined twins born in Britain for nearly 10 years, they were joined from the breastbone to the navel.

Although they also shared a bowel, they had separate hearts, limbs and spinal cords. They also shared a liver, but this organ has the power to regenerate itself if divided. The Astburys were said to be "overwhelmed and speechless with joy" at their daughters' birth. Melanie Astbury, on seeing them for the first time, described them as "beautiful".

Doctors said the twins were "stable and progressing satisfactorily" in the hospital's special baby unit. Three days later, on 18 September, they underwent an 11-hour operation to separate their bowels, which had become tangled in the womb, and the following day consultant paediatric surgeon Alan Dickson, who performed the operation, described it as successful and was "cautiously optimistic" that the twins would be able to eat normally within a year.

But four days later he admitted the extent of the bowel damage was a disappointment. "It is quite likely to have implications for the separation, but I am not pre-

fate and the surgeon's skills." They rang the hospital and told the doctors the next morning. "They were delighted," he said.

Elsewhere, people were less hopeful and considerably less bullish. Dr Michael Marsh, Melanie Astbury's consultant obstetrician, warned presciently at the time that the couple seemed "too optimistic ... the risks are enormous for both children, as there could be so many abnormalities not defined in ultrasound, such as shared gut and other abdominal abnormalities". If his wife was pregnant with conjoined twins, what would he have wanted? "I would have to say termination," he said. Had he said that to the Astburys? "No."

The pregnancy continued in secret until early last month when first reports of the impending birth found their way into the Sunday newspapers. The couple's solicitor, Andrew McWatt, shielded their identity until their story was swiftly bought for an undisclosed sum by Ian Monk of the *Daily Mail* and a series of in-depth interviews followed.

The tone of these interviews was consistently one of hope triumphing over adversity. The article that appeared

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The short lives of Chloe and Nicole Astbury

May 1995: Melanie and Brian Astbury are told they are expecting conjoined twins
14 September: Chloe and Nicole are born by Caesarean section at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, at 12.19pm. They share a liver
18 September: Consultant paediatric surgeon Alan Dickson performs an 11-hour operation to separate the twins, leaving an 18cm scar

21 September: Chloe and Nicole breathe for the first time
24 September: Melanie Astbury returns home from hospital
18 October: The twins are diagnosed with necrotising enterocolitis, a condition which affects the bowel and can cause trauma in infancy

pared to speculate on it," he said.

Nevertheless, the last time the hospital chiefs commented on Chloe and Nicole's condition, they said staff were "quietly pleased" with their progress. Doctors were waiting for the twins to become strong enough to undergo a full separation, which was not expected to happen for at least a year. But on 21 September they were taken off a ventilator and were able to breathe normally for the first time.

Shortly afterwards their mother was allowed home. Melanie Astbury, 25, who also has a three-year-old son, returned daily to St Mary's to help care for her daughters. "I'm washing their faces now and changing nappies, so I feel much more involved as a mother," she said. "I haven't bathed them yet but I hope to soon."

Feelings about the birth, however, were still running high. Last Monday the parents appeared on ITV's *This Morning* show and revealed that they had received hate-mail because of their decision not to terminate. They had thrown the letters from the "sickos" away, they said. They added that an operation to separate their daughters was "inevitable", but they had "no regrets" about going through with the birth.

They had every reason to feel confident. The babies had progressed much better than could reasonably have been expected after their major operation four weeks ago. They had been fed on milk, both orally and through a tube to the abdomen. So pleased was the hospital with the twins' progress that last Friday doctors had discussed with the Astburys the possibility of the babies being discharged.

But last weekend Chloe became affected by a bowel disease known as neo-natal necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), which spreads to other vital organs. Joined so closely to her sister, she could not fail to pass on the disease and over the next three days both babies had gradually deteriorated from the infection - which has a 25 per cent mortality rate among babies who develop it.

Alan Dickson said yesterday that it had always been in the doctors' minds that they might have to operate to save one of the children. But both of them had deteriorated at such a rate that the doctors had decided the best option was to support them both and have them in private. "They have to be allowed to deal with this in their own way and, in particular, in a private way," she said.

Sources at the *Daily Mail* yesterday said it "had not been decided" whether the paper would run a subsequent interview with the Astburys. "I think that would be up to the parents," the source said.

They're just SO BEAUTIFUL

had been good for the twins and that Chloe and Nicole had been the victims of "bad luck". "It is very bad luck to be a conjoined twin in the first place. Our information on the scans was very encouraging. But, as you know, they had an operation revealing congenital problems with the gut far beyond what we had expected," he said.

"To come through what they came through in the first 11 days of life and then to be hit with this out of the blue was extremely bad luck." The doctor said medical staff had remained optimistic that the babies could have looked forward to normal lives.

The Astburys were described yesterday as "devastated". "Melanie and Brian were full of hope and this turn of events was totally unexpected for them both," said Ms McWatt. She made a personal plea to the media to allow Mr and Mrs Astbury to grieve in private. "They have to be allowed to deal with this in their own way and, in particular, in a private way," she said.

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Witnesses

Ian Lang may have the sex appeal of a Scottish pallbearer to voters south of the border, but Wilkes hears that he is now The Chosen One. John Major's friends are saying in the privacy of their drawing rooms that the new President of the Board of Trade is the Prime Minister's preferred choice to succeed him when he goes. Mr Major has no wish to repeat Baroness Thatcher's mistake of going on, and on, and on, if - against all the odds - he wins the next election. He will stand down and tend his bank balance and, according to some close to Mr Major, will certainly have gone by the end of 1998.

The succession is therefore a live issue. Mr Lang is regarded by Major as sound in all particulars, and not easily pushed around by the right wing, which will be on the rampage once Mr Major goes. This is the last chance for the left to secure its influence in the choice of leader, while the right is still hopelessly split between Messrs Redwood and Portillo. Hence Wilkes advises buying shares in Lang.

He may have an exterior as long-faced as an Edinburgh terrace, but he is very good company over venison and chips and has an impressive humour pedigree, being a contemporary of the famous Footlights set, who went on to create Monty Python. He is also a wonderful mimic: if ever he did become Prime Minister, Tony Bremner might as well join the dole queue.

Wilkes is, of course, hedging his bets by putting money on Gillian Shephard. But remember you heard Mr Lang's name here first. After all, it makes compelling sense in one respect: if Labour wins the election and introduces a Scottish parliament, who better to mastermind a quiet U-turn in Tory policy by agreeing to retain that body than Lang - the man who 20 years earlier argued that an assembly was the way to revive Tory fortunes north of the border?

We would certainly be in the throes of the leadership battle now, say chums of the Prime Minister, had Mr Major not carried out his threat to call an early leadership election in July. And the challenger would have been the same Vulcan pretender: The Major camp believes that John Redwood, far from being forced by the sudden turn of events to declare his hand, was gearing up to run - but only in November. And what is more, they believe he could easily have won had he had the extra time. Major would have had a dreadful summer and a gaudy conference dominated by the

about what colleagues regard as the further self-aggrandisement of Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, First Secretary and Supreme Being. His Majesty's Chief Minister for Titles has moved into temporary premises at the Treasury, pending refurbishment of his vast suite of rooms in the Cabinet Office. He has found a suitable immense room to his liking for the regular meetings of his Cabinet committee.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Wilkes hears, was amazed to discover this Treasury room existed and raised an eyebrow at the thought of the Supreme One moving into his territory. The Iron King sits in an imposing leather chair. Unprepared victims sink unsuspectingly into extremely deep and large sofa opposite. Those shorter in the leg find it difficult to bend their knees, let alone reach the floor, and need a block and tackle to haul them out again.

To put the rest of the Cabinet in their case, the Sun King regularly chairs the meeting in a V-necked sweater - some uncharitable souls pointedly remark how his woolly matches his ability to grasp detail.

Wilkes can advise Labour not to bother reserving a seat on its benches in the House of Lords for Baroness Thatcher. Despite Tony Blair's overtures about respecting the Iron Lady, she will not be coming across. Thatcher has become a Majorite. She informed Wilkes at her "do" at Cliveden this week (where she and the Queen again clashed over their choice of dress) that all her past differences with Major have been buried, and she will campaign for him at the next election. The Prime Minister's decision to roll out the red carpet for her 70th birthday party at Downing Street did the trick. "It was a total love-in," said an admirer.

There was an added fillip for Clare Short, Labour's whinny's spokesperson, as she hatched her way back into the Shadow Cabinet in Wednesday's elections. Her assistante Virginia Heywood won the sweepstakes on the results of the increasingly

ridiculous event. Wilkes finds it difficult to imagine Tony Blair will put up with it much longer.



Just the ticket

Just deserts generally come to those who wait. Wilkes is reassured to learn Sir Philip (Phil) Harris, carpet magnate, deputy chairman of the Conservative Party's board of treasurers and the man who bankrolled the hi-tech Sir Philip Harris House at Guy's Hospital, could be destined for even higher things. He is being heavily tipped by Tony Blair for a seat in the Lords in the next honours list, on account of his fine record in raising money, which has helped a beleaguered Conservative Central Office reduce its overdraft from £1.14m in August to a mere £9.9m. He will also play a crucial part in building up a £22m "war chest" for the election.

Deep mystery persists, however, about the future of Sir Basil Fieldman, chairman of the National Union, the party's voluntary wing. Will he be passed over yet again? At least Wilkes's good friend Jeffrey Archer is well on his way to complete reintegration. Not only did he resurrect his fabled shepherd's pie and Krug parties at the Tory party conference last week - at which, incidentally, Wilkes was unable to spot Kenneth Clarke amid an otherwise full Cabinet turn-out - but he has reinstated those fabled nationwide speaking tours. After 18 months out in the political cold, he is pulling crowds of up to 400 at meetings.

Perhaps the most extraordinary rehabilitation of all was that of John Profumo. At Lady Thatcher's birthday dinner, he and his wife were seated next to the Queen.

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Heat but no light in the Commons

Yesterday's furious Commons debate on the prison service produced a great deal of heat but little light. We are no nearer to knowing whether Michael Howard or Derek Lewis is telling the truth about what really happened in the aftermath of the Parkhurst breakout.

The Home Secretary gave a typically robust performance. He stuck to his position that he did not interfere in the operational control of prisons. In particular, he denied that he had tried to force Mr Lewis to suspend John Marriott, the Parkhurst governor.

Meanwhile, Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, backed up by Tony Blair, repeated Mr Lewis's claims that Mr Howard not only intervened daily in the running of Britain's prisons, but tried in bally Mr Lewis into suspending the government. But it was not Labour's day. Mr Howard was the better swordsman: Mr Straw proved no match.

The debate was a miserable spectacle. Braying MPs did not bother to discuss this week's Leamont report, which represents a damning indictment of security in Britain's jails. All that seemed to bother Labour was whether the party could destroy the political career of Mr Howard. And the Home Secretary seemed to have, as ever, only one thing on his mind: protecting and enhancing his own and his party's prospects.

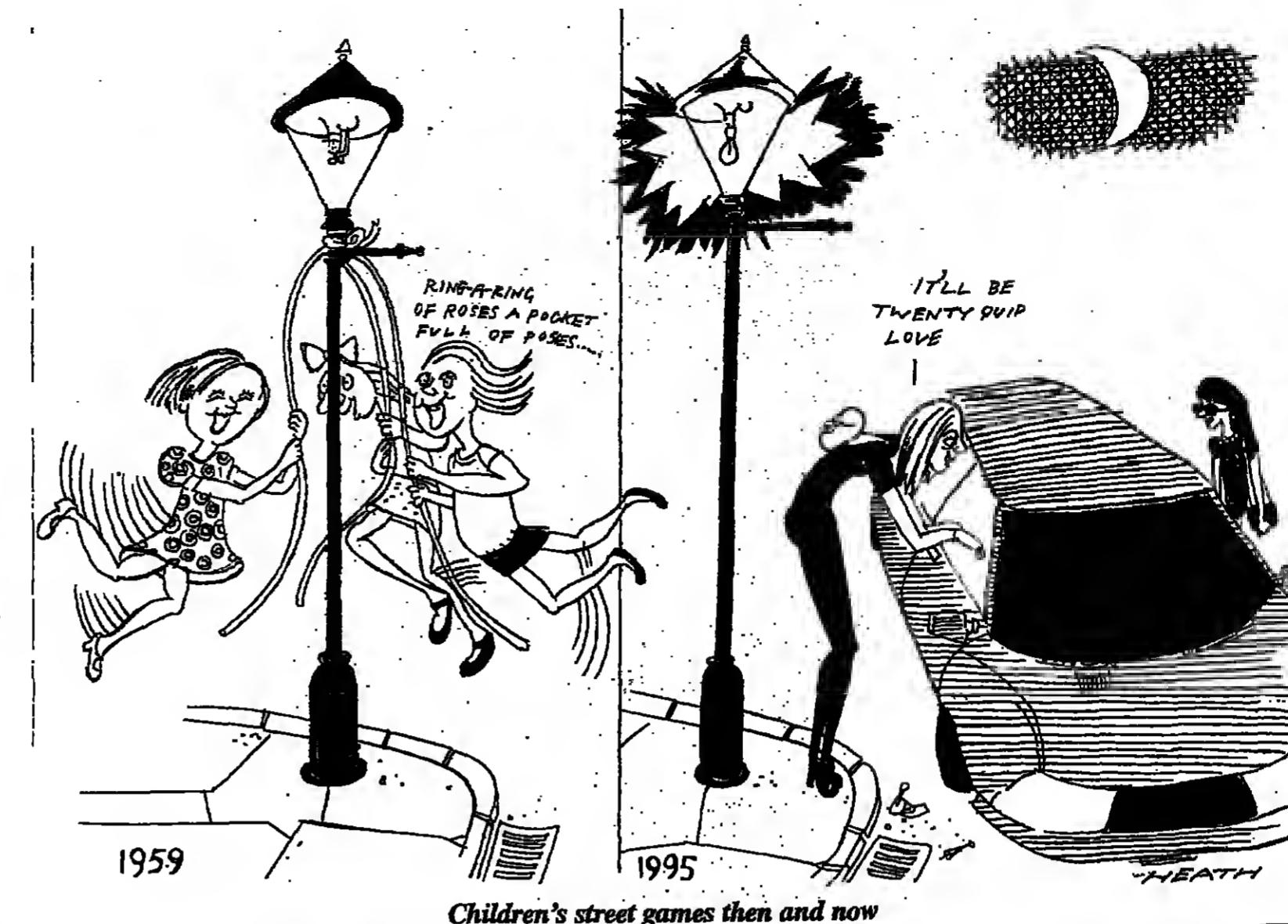
Labour's narrow agenda is depressing. But the source of the problem in this controversy remains Mr Howard. Yesterday's debate became obsessed with the obscure detail of what he did and when, because this Home Secretary is so determined to

avoid responsibility for even the smallest action which might be judged embarrassing. In a torrent of self-righteousness, he will blame anyone but himself.

This style has characterised so many of the events that have taken place since the Parkhurst breakout. First there was the showy, unconstructive haste in removing Mr Marriott from the jail. Then on Monday there was the rush to sack Mr Lewis as director-general of the prison service. Letters we publish today from Sir Duncan Nichol, a member of the Prison Board and a highly experienced Whitehall operator, show the strength of support on that board for Mr Lewis and his achievements over the past three years.

They also demonstrate the urgent need in the prison service for clear leadership and organisational stability. The primary challenge facing the prison service, says Sir Duncan, "is managerial - how to close the gap between strategic intent and action on the ground. This requires further clarification at all levels of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities."

A Home Secretary addicted to the soundbite looks incapable of supplying that strategic direction. Last week, he turned aside without debate the objections by the Lord Chief Justice to fixed sentences, ignoring the pressures this would place on the size of the prison population. This week, responding to the Leamont report, he failed to offer a credible plan to house maximum security prisoners. Goodness knows what kind of brief Mr Howard has in mind for Mr Lewis's successor. Those of a logical disposition need not apply.



Children's street games then and now

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nuclear safety: commitment and credibility

From Mr John G. Collier

Sir: I want to demolish the canard that privatisation will have any adverse impact on nuclear safety at Britain's nuclear power stations ("Nuclear sell-off 'a threat to safety'", 18 October). I write as chairman of Nuclear Electric plc with over 40 years experience in the nuclear industry, much of it directly related to safety.

Over the past five years Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear have both achieved exceptionally high safety standards while at the same time considerably enhancing their commercial performance. Safety and performance are complementary; they are the hallmark of a quality company.

More importantly, there can be no compromise on safety as a result of privatisation because the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate will continue to regulate the same stations in the same way, to the same very high standards. It is worth noting that in their submissions to the Government's Nuclear Review, the NII and the Health and Safety Executive said they saw no clearly change these arrangements.

Both NE and SNL have an absolute commitment to safety. We have done this by adopting the best management practices in both the safety and commercial fields. Performance indicators for safety staff are not driven by profit. Their prime targets are demonstrable enhancement of safety as measured by a series of performance indicators given in our published annual health and safety reports. By any objective standards this has proved successful - all our health and safety indicators (radiation dose to workers, incident statistics, etc)

are far improved since both companies' formation in 1990.

Nuclear power will survive if our stations are not operated to the highest levels of safety - but then our staff will not permit anything less.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN G. COLLIER
Chairman
Nuclear Electric
Gloves

18 October

From Mr Phil Carpenter

Sir: The article "Nuclear sell-off 'a threat to safety'" (18 October) quoted Scottish Nuclear as saying that safety in the nuclear industry "is regulated by the independent Nuclear Installations Inspectorate". As the trade union which represents all of the Nuclear Installations Inspectors and other specialist staff, the Institute of Professional Managers, Managers and Specialists (IPMS) is ideally placed to comment on the resources for regulation and the morale of the staff who undertake the regulation. Over the course of the last few years the Government's attitude to the funding of the Health and Safety Executive has changed markedly.

A couple of years ago, there was a consensus between the Government and the Health and Safety Commission to the extent that the HSC's very reasonable and modest bids for financial resources to run the system were always met in full. The past three years have seen the HSE's budget cut by more than 10 per cent, and even more substantial cuts are anticipated for 1996-97. The results have been cuts in staffing levels which have, up until now, been

covered by the dedication of HSE's staff, who have attempted to ensure that vital work has not been left undone.

Over the past two years, however, the pace of change in HSE (forced by government-driven cuts and initiatives) has dramatically increased. This year, staff morale in HSE has reached as low a point as people can remember.

The "independence" of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has, up until now, been guaranteed by ensuring that their pay levels have been analogous to those in the public sector.

It is now clear that the HSE needs to ensure that the pay levels for HSE staff, including NII, can be maintained, only at the price of job cuts. The pay determination mechanism has until now enabled NII to maintain its professionalism and credibility with the nuclear industry; that is now at risk.

Along with all other HSE staff, the NII are being given stark choice pay increases and job cuts (which mean that workloads increase and morale and safety suffer) or no pay increases and smaller job cuts (which has exactly the same result).

The Government's fixed view that "efficiency" only results when fewer staff are employed is clearly flawed.

Yours faithfully,
PHIL CARPENTER
Negotiations Officer
IPMS: Institution of
Professional Managers
and Specialists
Liverpool

18 October

Positive approach to racial discrimination

From Mr Alistair Cooper

Sir: Michael Gottlieb's difficulty in persuading black people to work for Smolensky's restaurants (letter, 12 October) is easily solved. The Race Relations Act 1976 contains provisions for "positive action" measures to be taken. These include providing training for, and encouraging applications from, under-represented racial groups. Further details and advice can be obtained from the nearest offices of the Race Relations Employment Advisory Service and the Commission for Racial Equality.

It does matter very much if the intrusion of the commercial interest results in a portrayal so distorted as to destroy the public perception of great figure from the past - which is what I fear may happen here. It can so easily lead to denigration of the outstanding achievements and a cynical disdain for those who admire them.

Let's not forget the extraordinary achievements of Lord Baden-Powell. With amazing imagination and originality he created a movement that has brought excitement and adventure to many millions of boys and girls across the world through Scouting and Guiding. His methods were revolutionary at the time, but have stood the test of time, having been adopted by many other educational bodies. His vision has enabled us to overcome the barriers set up by those who have little to contribute but to carp, criticise and denigrate the efforts of others.

The writer is the Chief Scout.

After working with the undergraduates, the companies and the Civil Service departments often offer them permanent jobs, and some are now in senior or middle management positions.

However, there are very few senior black managers, and this gives young black people a clear message in terms of career expectations. For young blacks in Britain to believe in the existence of opportunities requires that organisations join those working with the Windsor Fellowship to put some effort into changing the message, so they can reap the benefits of attracting talented black and Asian staff.

Yours sincerely
JOHN CLARK
Chief Executive
The Windsor Fellowship
London, E2
13 October

Keith Moore not only defrauded Sting, but also various bankers, a publishing company and the Inland Revenue. The fact that he managed to defraud so many normally careful business people illustrates the devious and clever nature of the fraud, which was practised by Keith Moore under the umbrella of a large number of banks and bank accounts. Such bank accounts are not unusual for an internationally successful music artist, with large amounts of income being received and legitimate expenses being paid out constantly. Neither Sting nor anyone else would spot a fraud which took the Fraud Squad three years to prove.

It was a clever fraud perpetrated against many people. However, with my help, that of Nick Valner of Frere Cobainley Bischoff and that of Sting's manager, Miles Copeland, nearly all the money has been recovered. The monies were not recovered from the people who benefited from the fraud, but from people who were taken in by Keith Moore and who, sadly for them, have had to refund Sting out of their own, albeit corporate, pockets.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER BURLEY
Burley and Co
Solicitors
London, WC2
18 October

Sting too rich to notice?

From Mr Christopher Burley

Sir: Was Sting too rich to notice his ex-accountant, Keith Moore, had stolen over £6m, for which Keith Moore has been sent to prison for six years? As Sting's solicitor and the person involved in recovering nearly all the stolen monies (report, 18 October), hopefully the following description of the fraud will put the record straight.

All Sting's and his companies' income received in respect of his career was paid into bank accounts on which only Sting or his wife could sign. This was except for very specific and safe-guarded situations, such as paying tax, VAT and tour expenses. As this was the case and as Sting signed thousands of individual cheques over the years, like anyone else having bank accounts he fell in complete control of them. Keith Moore, as his accountant, had the responsibility for reviewing Sting's bank statements and to advise Sting on where his monies should go. No one else received copies of Sting's bank statements, not only because his personal finances are confidential to him, his accountant and the tax authorities, but because as Sting and his wife controlled those accounts there was no reason for anyone else to be involved.

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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What are women to make of Farrakhan?

The black male crisis of identity will not be solved by demanding a return to traditional gender roles

For the first time in a generation, black America has this week put itself on the mainstream map. For the media, the most striking thing about Monday's Million Man March on Washington was that all of the 400,000 present were black. But just as important for the long-term may be the fact that they were all men. Whereas Martin Luther King's rally three decades ago embraced black and white, women as well as men, Louis Farrakhan's march kept women away. No longer is one emancipation – that of race – automatically linked to that of gender.

The reason is simple. The crisis besetting America's black community is a crisis of black masculinity. The collapse of the US's manufacturing base since the Fifties has hit unskilled black men the hardest. By 1964, the year after King's march on Washington, black unemployment was running at 12 per cent, more than double the rate for whites – and one reason why King, when he was assassinated, was turning to jobs as the key issue. Sidney Wilhelmi, author of *Who Needs the Negro?*, describes the shift thus: "Increasingly he [the black man] is not so much exploited as he is irrelevant. The dominant whites no longer need to exploit the black minority." Today, while black unemployment rates overall are static at 11.3 per cent, teenage black unemployment is 36.4 per cent, almost two and a half times the rate for white teenagers.

Economic redundancy is not the only problem. It has been matched by redundancy in the family: 68 per cent

of black households are now headed by single mothers, and with one in three black men under 30 in prison, or on probation or parole, a wider process of disconnection is under way.

In the UK there are similar trends. A report published by the TUC this week, aptly called *Black and Betrayed*, found that if you are black you are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as whites. In London it is even worse, with three out of five young black men unemployed.

Here, many people respond by wanting to push forward the liberal agenda of rights. But in the US many see the emergence of Farrakhan as a straightforward result of the failure of the liberal agenda. A survey by the *Washington Post* found that 81 per cent of black Americans feel there is a dearth of black American leaders capable of articulating black concerns. Old civil rights organisations are seen to have been tried and found wanting. The OJ Simpson trial vividly captured the racist underbelly of white America. Many of the tools by which King and others hoped his dream would come true have crumbled. Even the success story of the past 30 years – the burgeoning black American middle class – are resentful because they have gained income but are still denied respect.

Farrakhan's appeal to black men to pride in themselves once again, to reclaim their communities and be responsible to their families is one that many black women will endorse. After all, many have struggled for years to be the best possible mothers to their children, and have kept their commun-

HELEN WILKINSON
The opportunity is lost for black men to learn self reliance from their women

which appeals to Farrakhan's numerous middle-class supporters. According to one poll, 69 per cent of the people who marched had an annual income of more than \$30,000 and 59 per cent had attended college.

However, the key point is that for Farrakhan and his followers, the priority is liberation from within rather than from the outside. Blacks must all become agents of their own destiny and the black community of men, in particular, needs to sort itself out.

Farrakhan's appeal to black men to

ties going against the odds while many black men have gone astray. Monday's events may lead to the redirection of energies that Farrakhan pleaded for, that blacks should organise, register to vote, join political parties, shape their own destiny.

This was more than a plea for black activism. Instead of seeking salvation through the constitutional system, black America must, in Farrakhan's view, reject the slave mentality of a victim group calling for rights and entitlements. They must recognise that rights without responsibilities are meaningless. This is, of course, a subliminally threatening message for the white majority, precisely because Farrakhan is arguing that blacks should no longer depend on them. In this sense the politics he espouses symbolises a shift away from a culture of victimhood to power politics.

Yet, modern as his politics is and in ways that white commentators have found hard to appreciate, his argument is profoundly flawed. In the first place history suggests that it is often wise for minorities to declare war on majorities or to try to separate themselves off, especially when, as is the case in America, the white majority feels profoundly insecure about its own jobs and prospects. In South Africa, for example, the black leadership took extraordinary pains to ensure their movement did not become a separatist one.

Perhaps more important in the long run is Farrakhan's failure to offer a convincing analysis on gender. His

message offers little to the thousands of American black women entrepreneurs, nor to the girls who are doing better in school than their male peers. They may sympathise with the agenda of self-reliance and personal responsibility, and the demand for better behaviour from black men, but they are unlikely to buckle down to traditional and submissive roles. And his gender blindness also means that the opportunity is lost for black men to learn the virtues of self-reliance and responsibility from the women in their communities.

Many of these tensions are apparent in Britain, as well. Here, many young black women ask why they need black men at all, if they cannot get jobs and be reliable fathers. Papers such as the *Voice* run stories about the insensitivity of African Caribbean men as partners to their women. Similar trends are apparent in the white community, but the debate becomes particularly acute among a group that is still unsure of its identity.

In Britain Farrakhan's politics has yet to strike many chords, except perhaps in one or two London boroughs. But the style and the themes are likely to reverberate here soon, not least because the underlying causes of disconnection are also evident. This is why we should take note. For Farrakhan is not just emblematic of the new black politics; he is also a mirror of the new white male Christian movements to redefine and shore up masculinity, and the busting apart of the old certainties of race and gender politics.

Risks from oral contraception never match the drama of the scare stories, argues Polly Toynbee

The pill is still a girl's best friend

The pill panic is on, again. Yesterday the Committee on Safety of Medicines warned that seven brands of low-dose oral contraceptive carry a greater risk of thrombosis than other types. We have been here before, and no doubt we will be here again. In the darker corners of our cultural undergrowth there lurks a powerful puritanical instinct, eager to believe that the pill is bad for you, it will kill you – in effect, you will die of the promiscuity that the pill precipitated in the Sixties. The Pope said the same about syphilis when it first swept across Europe. Homophobes said it about Aids in the Eighties: death and disease are the wages of sex.

But there is far more to fear from fear itself. The previous major pill scare in 1983 was followed a few months later by a high peak of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, mainly in the 16 to 29 age group. Pregnant women are still more than twice as likely to get a thrombosis as women

The pill gives an increased protection against endometrial and ovarian cancers

who have been taking any of the seven contraceptive pills implicated yesterday.

It was a big panic about thrombosis that led women in 1971 to move from high-dose to such low-dose pills, in the correct belief that they offered a lower risk. Yesterday's report shows that one group of the low-dose pills carries less risk than another. However, the fact is that more women may be put at greater risk of thrombosis as a result of another anti-pill panic. A million and a half women take these seven low-dose pills. Thirty out of every 100,000 of them will get a venous thrombosis – some 450 women in all. But the risk of death from that is exceedingly low: 1 per cent, or four to five women a year.

While this does represent nearly double the risk of other forms of contraceptive pill, and six times that for women not on any oral contraceptive, the pill has other health benefits, less often stressed than its risks. Taking it for even a relatively short period of time gives an increased long-term protection against endometrial and ovarian cancers. The benefits of this protection far outweigh the risks of thrombosis, even of those more dangerous pills listed yesterday. Ovarian cancer is the most common gynaecological cancer: 6,000 women are diagnosed with it every year and about 4,300 die of it. The pill halves the risk of getting ovarian cancer and this protective effect lasts for 15 years after ceasing to take it.

A quarter of all women of childbearing age rely on the pill, and the great majority of them are in the younger age groups, who suffer least risk of thrombosis – though it increases if they smoke. Sterilisation is a slightly more popular method of contraception: 12 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men, mainly in their mid-thirties and upwards, choose this more drastic method. Seventeen per cent rely on the condom, 5 per cent on the IUD.

Over the years since the pill was first made widely available, there has been a host of scare stories. Some have been well-founded, based on serious research, as with yesterday's report. The problem is often not with the

Time to remember: the days when the pill promised unlimited sexual freedom

Photograph: Hulton

logical cancer: 6,000 women are diagnosed with it every year and about 4,300 die of it. The pill halves the risk of getting ovarian cancer and this protective effect lasts for 15 years after ceasing to take it.

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firmed, except perhaps in the small print of specialist medical publications that don't reach the public eye.

How many false alarms can you think of over the years about the causes of cancer, cot-death, schizophrenia or spina bifida which made a splash on the day, but then faded away, unresolved? The mythology of the pill is littered with these shadowy fears and facts, half-remembered headlines, rumour, gossip, supposition and superstition.

It used to be said knowingly, for instance, that it is not a good idea to stay on the pill for many years without a break. Especially where women started taking it in their teens, the word was that they might risk infertility, the natural rhythm of their bodies would be destroyed for ever. Nature is not mocked, goes the notion, and if you mess with it too violently for too long, it will retaliate.

Not so. That is a theory long since

underlying feeling permeates the glee with which the media fall upon anti-pill stories, while conspicuously failing to give front-page headlines to the studies that have shown its beneficial effects.

Women themselves these days tend to fear the pill because it feels unnatural. Gross boorish interference with the rhythms of the body goes against the grain in an age when people flock to natural remedies, homeopathic medicines, herbal tea and so-called "whole" and "organic".

Men have always feared the pill because it gave women their freedom. Nervously, men joked about it and pretended to give them freedom for unbridled rapacious sex, but in truth it was women's sexuality that was liberated by it. Fear of pregnancy and all the social constructs that entailed kept women in their submissive social place. The Pill is woman's best friend, and it is time they learned to overcome their mistrust and love it as they should.

Each new scare deserves to be taken seriously, but it needs to be put into proper perspective. It is quite wrong to think Mother Nature knows best. In matters of woman's fertility, she is the enemy. Not so. That is a theory long since

discredited. The Family Planning Association asserts confidently that for healthy non-smoking women there is no clear reason not to take the pill right up to the menopause.

Every time there is a panic, the use of the pill drops. It reached an all-time high of 29 per cent before the first thrombosis scare and dipped to 22 per cent in the mid-Eighties. It remains, however, the most popular contraceptive method by far among the young, who favour it because it is so easy, and so unproblematic – sex without the awkwardness of revealing premeditated intent. No strings, nothing need be said or done, sex without embarrassment.

But it is precisely this simplicity that worries people. As the *Sunday Telegraph* pronounced during the 1983 scare: "There is no such thing as a free lunch ... Mother Nature wants to cool our hot little heels over the pill, ticking us off with a warning that it is not a green light for licence."

That will not be the case.

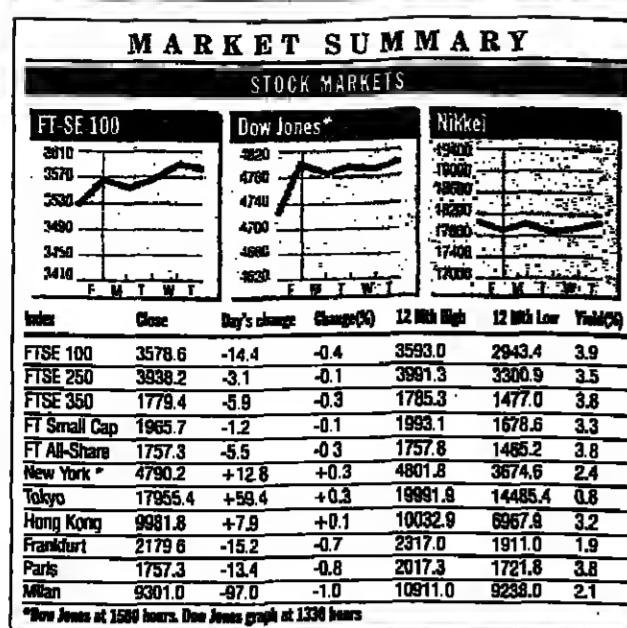
"To return to the subject of the motion," said another member, "can the Home Secretary explain how these men came to be in the vaults beneath the Chamber, and who, in the last resort was responsible?"

"I am responsible for the safe arrest of the men," said Mr

safe arrest of the men," said Mr

Howard oow

considered the matter closed.



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

FTSE 350 companies (excluding investment trusts)

Name	Falls	Price(£) Change(£) %Chg	Rises	Price(£) Change(£) %Chg			
Polyphill	166	6	3.8	Iceland Group	165	6	3.5
Garmore	304	11	3.8	Laird Group	419	15	3.5
Trafalgar House	21.75	0.75	3.6	Athrons	343	10	2.8
M&G Group (Hdg)	1553	45	3.4	Bryant Group	104	3	2.8
Guardian Ry Ex	249	8	3.3	Albert Fisher	53	1.5	2.8

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond
6.65	7.30	7.00
6.60	7.25	6.75
6.55	7.20	6.50
6.50	7.15	6.40
6.45	7.10	6.30
6.40	7.05	6.20
6.35	7.00	6.10
6.30	6.95	6.00
6.25	6.90	5.90
6.20	6.85	5.80
6.15	6.80	5.70
6.10	6.75	5.60
6.05	6.70	5.50
6.00	6.65	5.40
5.95	6.60	5.30
5.90	6.55	5.20
5.85	6.50	5.10
5.80	6.45	5.00
5.75	6.40	4.90
5.70	6.35	4.80
5.65	6.30	4.70
5.60	6.25	4.60
5.55	6.20	4.50
5.50	6.15	4.40
5.45	6.10	4.30
5.40	6.05	4.20
5.35	6.00	4.10
5.30	5.95	4.00
5.25	5.90	3.90
5.20	5.85	3.80
5.15	5.80	3.70
5.10	5.75	3.60
5.05	5.70	3.50
5.00	5.65	3.40
4.95	5.60	3.30
4.90	5.55	3.20
4.85	5.50	3.10
4.80	5.45	3.00
4.75	5.40	2.90
4.70	5.35	2.80
4.65	5.30	2.70
4.60	5.25	2.60
4.55	5.20	2.50
4.50	5.15	2.40
4.45	5.10	2.30
4.40	5.05	2.20
4.35	5.00	2.10
4.30	4.95	2.00
4.25	4.90	1.90
4.20	4.85	1.80
4.15	4.80	1.70
4.10	4.75	1.60
4.05	4.70	1.50
4.00	4.65	1.40
3.95	4.60	1.30
3.90	4.55	1.20
3.85	4.50	1.10
3.80	4.45	1.00
3.75	4.40	0.90
3.70	4.35	0.80
3.65	4.30	0.70
3.60	4.25	0.60
3.55	4.20	0.50
3.50	4.15	0.40
3.45	4.10	0.30
3.40	4.05	0.20
3.35	4.00	0.10
3.30	3.95	0.00
3.25	3.90	-0.10
3.20	3.85	-0.20
3.15	3.80	-0.30
3.10	3.75	-0.40
3.05	3.70	-0.50
3.00	3.65	-0.60
2.95	3.60	-0.70
2.90	3.55	-0.80
2.85	3.50	-0.90
2.80	3.45	-1.00
2.75	3.40	-1.10
2.70	3.35	-1.20
2.65	3.30	-1.30
2.60	3.25	-1.40
2.55	3.20	-1.50
2.50	3.15	-1.60
2.45	3.10	-1.70
2.40	3.05	-1.80
2.35	3.00	-1.90
2.30	2.95	-2.00
2.25	2.90	-2.10
2.20	2.85	-2.20
2.15	2.80	-2.30
2.10	2.75	-2.40
2.05	2.70	-2.50
2.00	2.65	-2.60
1.95	2.60	-2.70
1.90	2.55	-2.80
1.85	2.50	-2.90
1.80	2.45	-3.00
1.75	2.40	-3.10
1.70	2.35	-3.20
1.65	2.30	-3.30
1.60	2.25	-3.40
1.55	2.20	-3.50
1.50	2.15	-3.60
1.45	2.10	-3.70
1.40	2.05	-3.80
1.35	2.00	-3.90
1.30	1.95	-4.00
1.25	1.90	-4.10
1.20	1.85	-4.20
1.15	1.80	-4.30
1.10	1.75	-4.40
1.05	1.70	-4.50
1.00	1.65	-4.60
0.95	1.60	-4.70
0.90	1.55	-4.80
0.85	1.50	-4.90
0.80	1.45	-5.00
0.75	1.40	-5.10
0.70	1.35	-5.20
0.65	1.30	-5.30
0.60	1.25	-5.40
0.55	1.20	-5.50
0.50	1.15	-5.60
0.45	1.10	-5.70
0.40	1.05	-5.80
0.35	1.00	-5.90
0.30	0.95	-6.00
0.25	0.90	-6.10
0.20	0.85	-6.20
0.15	0.80	-6.30
0.10	0.75	-6.40
0.05	0.70	-6.50
0.00	0.65	-6.60

*1990 December figures converted to 1995 rates.

CURRENCIES

£/\$	£/DM	£/Y
1.58	2.21	1.62
1.57	2.20	1.61
1.56	2.19	1.60
1.55	2.18	1.59
1.54	2.17	1.58
1.53	2.16	1.57
1.52	2.15	1.56
1.51	2.14	1.55
1.50	2.13	1.54
1.49	2.12	1.53
1.48	2.11	1.52
1.47	2.10	1.51
1.46	2.09	1.50
1.45	2.08	1.49
1.44	2.07	1.48
1.43	2.06	1.47
1.42	2.05	1.46
1.41	2.04	1.45
1.40	2.03	1.44
1.39	2.02	1.43
1.38	2.01	1.42
1.37	2.00	1.41
1.36	1.99	1.40
1.35	1.98	1.39
1.34	1.97	1.38
1.33	1.96	1.37
1.32	1.95	1.36
1.31	1.94	1.35
1.30	1.93	1.34
1.29	1.92	1.33
1.28	1.91	1.32
1.27	1.90	1.31
1.26	1.89	1.30
1.25	1.88	1.29
1.24	1.87	1.28
1.23	1.86	1.27
1.22	1.85	1.26
1.21	1.84	1.25
1.20	1.83	1.24
1.19	1.82	1.23
1.18	1.81	1.22
1.17	1.80	1.21
1.16	1.79	1.20
1.15	1.78	1.19
1.14	1.77	1.18
1.13	1.76	1.17
1.12	1.75	



COMMENT
"It is quite something when one of the once great names of British industry becomes nothing more than a penny stock poot for the spivier end of the stock market!"

Trafalgar House

It is quite something when Trafalgar House, once one of the great names of British industry, becomes nothing more than a penny stock poot for the spivier end of the stock market. But yesterday's price gyrations in another session of extremely heavy volume confirmed that to be the case.

It is no surprise that cocktail party gossip in the colony's dying days is all about the Kewicks' latest disaster, the collapse of Jardine Matheson's escape tunnel from the Chinese authorities that the so-called Noble House has always failed to appear. There are few places where loss of face stings so harshly.

What is most remarkable is the way that, so far, Henry and Simon Kewick have survived the loss to Jardine's shareholders of so much of their investment in Trafal.

Maybe the bargain hunters that swept the shares of their lows yesterday are right to gamble that the brothers would never dare to crystallise the loss of the £300m they have poured in to the sinking conglomerate since 1992. In the context of a giant trading empire such as Jardine, £300m may not be life-threatening but it is the sort of souled-up investment that would rightly be the end of many a chief executive.

Clinging on and hoping for the best is unlikely to be a realistic option for Hongkong Land, the subsidiary through which Jardine took the ill-conceived stake. If Trafal is to survive its current deep-seated

problems it must pare down to its contracting and engineering core, selling off Comard and Ideal, the housebuilder, and inject enough new cash to convince customers the company has a viable future. Jardine must risk throwing good money after bad.

If Trafal were a manufacturing business, the strength of its product might be enough to pull it through. But in engineering and contracting, confidence is all — customers will simply not consider placing orders with a company under a cloud as large and dark as that hanging over Trafal.

The other reason Jardine will probably avoid pulling the plug is the doubt doing so would cast on the company's whole strategy. It has got things wrong before, investing in UK property just before the 1970s collapse, for example, with the imminent arrival of the Chinese in Hong Kong the stakes are immeasurably higher this time round. Not only has Hongkong Land's continued support necessarily makes Trafal battered shares any more attractive. Only when the full extent of the damage to the company's balance sheet is revealed in December will anything but the utmost caution be appropriate.

Thorn music sweeter than CBI presidency

The CBI is still an important and influential organisation but Sir Colin Southgate,

chairman of Thorn EMI, can hardly be blamed for turning down its presidency. Over the next year or two, he is going to have his work more than cut out. Thorn EMI may not yet be in play, but it is pretty close to it. If Sir Colin decides to push ahead with plans to demerge the company's music and TV rental businesses, then it certainly will be. The music side, with its galaxy of stars and copyright, is one of the three biggest record labels in the world and the only one that it is even remotely possible to buy. As the multi-media revolution gathers pace, it becomes increasingly attractive.

Plainly it makes strategic sense to demerge the TV rental business, which is about as relevant to music as a ten-bob note. From a shareholder value point of view, it also makes commercial sense. TV rental and music as separately quoted companies would almost certainly be worth more than the two companies combined. But from the point of view of keeping the core music business independent and British — which Sir Colin is keen to do — it may make no sense at all. Once stripped of TV rental, the music side become even more easy to purchase. There's the conundrum.

And if the purpose of all this is only one of maximising shareholder value, there may be better ways of doing it. One method would be to put the music side up for sale (likely price £5bn plus) and make it subject to a trade auction. Certainly Thorn EMI has

already had approaches along these lines. The proceeds could then be handed back to shareholders by way of special dividend, allowing gross funds to claim a thumping great tax credit on top.

There is, however, one way in which the trick of both demerging and remaining independent might be accomplished. This would be to accompany the demerger with the acquisition by the music side of a more appropriate business — say in publishing. If that is what Sir Colin has in mind, it is no wonder he hasn't got time for the CBI.

Clarke wrestles with housing conundrum

Kenneth Clarke today meets with his Treasury team at the country get-away of Dornseywood with fresh calls for action to help the housing market ring in its ears.

At first blush, the latest dispatch from the battlefront of Arcadia Avenue could hardly be gloomier. Cornerstone, the rump of what was once the country's largest privately owned estate agency chain, went bust yesterday. Meanwhile, building societies said that their net lending had fallen by one-fifth in September. Banks also reported a decline in their mortgage lending — this in the last month before the new mortgage insurance provisions came into effect.

All powerful ammunition for the societies

in their lobbying for help in the Budget. The favoured tax break is now the removal of stamp duty, which at around £500m on residential property would at least have the merit of not costing an arm and a leg. But even if the Chancellor were not in the tight fiscal corner that he finds himself, he might think twice before granting the building societies their wish. There are signs that the housing market may already be recovering from this year's renewed slump.

Earlier this month, the Bank of England published figures showing a big jump in the number of loans approved in August by banks and building societies. In fact they reached their highest level so far this year. We now know that building societies increased their loan approvals in September, too.

Not all loan approvals translate into actual purchases, but they at least indicate whether people are seriously looking for houses. In a few days' time we'll know whether banks also stepped up their loan approvals in September. If this is so, it would show that August was not just a freak month and that the housing market might be poised for revival.

With so little money to spare, Kenneth Clarke is likely to cross his fingers and hope that the housing market is set to recover of its own accord. If he gets it wrong, he won't be the first Chancellor to be misled by the green shoots of recovery.

Nadir's sister sues for £5m damages

DAVID HELLIER
and JOHN WILLCOCK

The sister of Asil Nadir, the founder of Poly Peck, is to take the Serious Fraud Office to court for wrongful dismissal and false imprisonment. Big Navaz will claim £5m damages.

In a separate development it emerged yesterday that Mr Nadir is hoping to instruct Geoffrey Robertson QC, the barrister best known for his defence in the Matrix Churchill trial, to prepare a case to have the criminal proceedings against him dropped.

Mr Nadir was made personally bankrupt following the collapse of his £2bn Poly Peck business empire in 1990. The SFO subsequently brought fraud and theft charges against him totalling £30m. In 1993 he fled to northern Cyprus, which has no extradition treaties with the UK and where the tycoon enjoys government support.

The SFO has stressed since Mr Nadir's flight that she is still stand and they are ready to hold a trial if or when he returns to the UK.

Mr Nadir will argue that



Asil Nadir: "In tireless pursuit of his innocence"

there has been an abuse of due process. He will say that privileged documents have been opened and circulated and that there has been so much adverse publicity it makes it impossible for him to stand a fair trial.

Mrs Navaz issued writs yesterday in the High Court against the Serious Fraud Office and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner. She was arrested in connection with allegations — later withdrawn — that she was involved in a plot to bribe Mr Justice Tucker, the judge handling her brother's trial. The

SFO said yesterday it would be defending her writ.

Peter Krivinskas, Mrs Navaz's solicitor, said that his client was living in northern Cyprus and had been suffering depression since her arrest.

Mr Krivinskas, who also represents Mr Nadir, said the Poly Peck founder is "working tirelessly with a view to establishing his innocence. When the criminal case has been thrown out, he will claim compensation."

The SFO is scheduled to go to court next month for a preliminary hearing against Elizabeth Forsyth, Asil Nadir's former business colleague at Poly Peck. She returned to the UK following Mr Nadir's flight in 1993 to provide evidence to the SFO. She is being charged with two counts of handling stolen goods.

This month Chris Bishop, a co-administrator from accountants Coopers & Lybrand, held "peace talks" with Mr Nadir. He said on Wednesday that the talks had been "frank and useful". We are keeping the link (to Mr Nadir) open."

City Diary, page 26

Rises in executive pay begin to slow

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The row over British Gas pay and the Greenbury report have helped to moderate pay rises at the top of British industry, according to a survey by Bacon & Woodrow, the actuaries.

Chief executive salary increases have slipped back compared with a year ago, but there has been less impact from the furor on the pay rises of other board members.

Keith McNeish, introducing the survey, said: "The Cedric Brown effect — the pressure on senior executives pay — has embarrassed companies a little in terms of their most highly paid individual."

He believed that all the talk about telephone number salaries was persuading remuneration committees to say: "Let's peg the man at the top", even if they had to carry on paying the rest of the board above the rates of other people.

The survey also found a "spectacular" increase in the number of people expecting to retire at 60 rather than later. This has risen from 55 per cent

to 77 per cent. Mr McNeish said it would be interesting to know whether this reflected the fact that people found the heat of the kitchen too strong and wanted to get out.

The survey found total board salary packages among 731 people at 102 companies, including chief executives and bonuses, rose 8 per cent, but those of chief executives rose only 5.6 per cent. This narrow differential was the most significant finding of the survey.

The average main board director now receives a basic salary of £123,470 with benefits

and bonuses taking the total to £212,536. Chief executives' average basic salary is £228,738 with a total remuneration package averaging £399,318.

Bacon & Woodrow found 27 per cent of top executives had received no merit increase on basic salary and the average increase was 5 per cent — compared with 7 per cent last year.

However, 20 of the sample received more than 20 per cent and another 17 between 15 and 30 per cent. Last year the comparable figures were 30 and 42, suggesting a moderation of the extreme increases.

Chief Executives : notice periods

Notice Period	Percentage
1-6 months	30%
7-12 months	25%
13-24 months	20%
25-36 months	10%
45-60 months	5%

CBI warns on capital spending

PAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

As the Chancellor and his Treasury team gather at Dornseywood today for a key budget strategy meeting, business leaders have warned Kenneth Clarke not to axe capital projects to pay for tax cuts.

"We are worried about a strategy for the budget which involves significant cuts in capital expenditure to pay for tax cuts," said Adair Turner, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry. "The government has to be very careful of action that is in danger of causing a major setback in the construction industry."

"The danger is that once again they will mortgage the future to pay for short-term tax cuts," said Sir John Banham, chairman of Tarmac and a former CBI director-general.

A particular concern is that the government may slash capital spending programmes under the guise of a further expansion of the Private Finance Initiative. The PFI, which was launched in 1992, aims to get the private sector to finance capital projects which were formerly undertaken only by government.

The CBI is in favour of the PFI, but Mr Turner said that "we are very wary about the argument that the PFI has achieved considerable mo-

mentum. He pointed to over 500 projects in the pipeline for the health service worth £2bn. But few of these schemes have yet produced any actual expenditure — only £100m of capital spending has resulted in the health service so far.

CBI members say that there is a gap in capital expenditure before the PFI "kicks in". And one City financier involved in the schemes said that the Treasury is cutting back on public investment before projects funded through the scheme actually materialise. Gross public investment is already projected to fall by 10 per cent next year from its level in 1994/5.

Comment, above

Speculation grows over Leeson trial deal

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Nick Leeson's lawyer in Singapore, John Koh, met fraud investigators there amid mounting speculation yesterday that the former trader is seeking a deal. Mr Koh refused to discuss details of his discussions with the Commercial Affairs Department, the investigative arm of the Finance Ministry, but said: "We have been evaluating all the various defence options open to us."

The CAD has launched a full-scale investigation into a number of former top Barings' executives accused of covering-up a key warning sign that might have prevented the collapse of the merchant bank.

The CAD has interviewed James Bax and Simon Jones, formerly the two most senior Barings' executives in Singapore, and is keen to talk to Peter Norris, the London-based former chief executive. In a damning report by the Singa-

pore authorities into the demise of Barings, both Mr Norris and Mr Bax were accused of involvement in the cover-up and of lying to the investigators.

Lawrence Ang, director of the CAD, opened the door to a deal with Mr Leeson during his announcement on Wednesday that the investigation is to be widened to a handful of other executives. "We will see what he has to offer," he said. Mr Leeson appears to be increasingly resigned to facing trial in Singapore, although

he has appealed against the decision of a German court to approve his extradition.

After the Singapore authorities' report earlier this week, which broadened the blame for the bank's demise to notably, Mr Norris and Mr Bax, the British lawyer representing Mr Leeson, Stephen Pollard, said his client is now likely to get a fairer hearing in Singapore. Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday declared the Singapore findings on Barings to be consistent with the Bank's own inquiry, while admitting he had not read the report. Mr George, speaking in Kuala Lumpur during a goodwill tour of Asian financial centres — Singapore is not on the itinerary, said: "Based on press accounts I can say that it is consistent with our findings." Both had identified a single trader's unauthorised dealings and a failure of management controls as the main reasons for the Barings collapse.

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BUSINESS DEPOSITS

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Y
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The new shadow trade minister believes she can allay worries about Labour's policies. She talked to Peter Rodgers

Beckett prepares to calm industry's fears

Margaret Beckett, the new shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, plans to campaign to allay the fears of industrialists that Labour's business-friendly new policies may not be delivered when the party is in power.

Speaking last night as her new job was confirmed, she said: "It is part of my role to seek to allay people's fears if we can, and to reassure them if we can, that we are all very mindful of the needs of wealth creation and the vital importance of business and industry to our national well-being."

Mrs Beckett, who has had considerable experience of talking to business and the City as a member of the late John Smith's Treasury team before the last election, said she would do everything possible to "build up contacts and air and share concerns with industry". With Mr Smith, she was one of the principal members of the famous "prawn cocktail circuit" that tried to neutralise any opposition from the financial and business community to a Labour government.

On Wednesday, Sir Bryan Nicholson, president of the Confederation of British Industry, repeated his previous welcome of the big shift in Labour policy towards a more business friendly outlook. The CBI also gave a welcome to Labour's macroeconomic policy. But Sir Bryan said there were still fears among industrialists that once in power a Labour government would not be able to deliver on its new policies.

Mrs Beckett called on industrialists to be open minded this time round. She said: "Before the last general election a great many things we were saying were not at all dissimilar to what the CBI was saying, yet Sir John Banham (then director general of the CBI) went out of

his way to slag off the Labour party and was saying the CBI wouldn't have anything to do with it."

Mrs Beckett, who declined to comment on specific policies after only minutes in her new position, said: "I always thought it quite astonishing and very dismaying that government ministers would really tear into business representatives for their views and it was always swallowed."

She warned industrialists that it would get still worse under a renewed Tory mandate. "Were the Conservatives to be re-elected for a fifth term they really would believe that they could do anything they liked and wouldn't listen to anybody at all about anything – and that would include people in industry and commerce."

Mrs Beckett, who is moving from the health portfolio, said she had always found industrial policy fascinating. Her first job had been as an engineering apprentice at Metropolitan Vickers in Trafford Park, Manchester – a company later taken over by AEI which was in turn absorbed in the present GEC. She became a metallurgist.

Her first Labour party staff job was at headquarters working on industrial policy. Ever since then she had taken an interest in industry. "I have always had a constituency (Derby South) with very strong manufacturing industry interests. I have always tried to create and preserve good relations between the party and industrialists."

She added jokingly: "Some of my best friends are industrialists, as they say," and said she had played a minor role in setting up the Labour Industry Forum, which has been working with business people to develop detailed policies for the

party. But Mrs Beckett thought it impolitic to name the industrialists in the forum with whom she was friends.

Under her predecessor, Dr Jack Cunningham, the Labour industry team has worked at a wide range of policies on issues from competition policy to reg-



Trade entrance: Margaret Beckett called on industrialists to be open-minded and not to "slag off the Labour Party"

Photograph: Brian Harris

ulation and the utilities, but it has been overshadowed on the executive pay row by Gordon Brown, the Opposition Treasury spokesman.

Mr Brown has at times appeared to make all the running on the "fat cat" issue, sidelining Dr Cunningham, though pay

rises are mainly to do with corporate governance and other issues that belong to the trade side.

Mrs Beckett refused to be drawn into how she would share out these high profile issues – which attract a lot of personal publicity – with Mr Brown, but

dropped hints that she would become more involved.

She said she and Mr Brown would work together on the issues.

"Gordon has very effectively used the issue of what is happening in the utilities to highlight the issue of fairness –

and fairness is the key to our taxation policies".

Mrs Beckett added: "These things change and evolve." She looked forward to working with Mr Brown. "What we will do is to try to divide up the work and the exposure in ways that are most effective for the policies."

Mrs Beckett did not want to lay down any rules about who did what, and believed in working it out as it went along.

She believed she would be fighting a government that had to a considerable extent run out of ideas and steam, which explained why some of the newer developments in policy towards business were also ideas prominent in Labour thinking.

Observers believe that areas of partial overlap – and possible continuity from a Labour and Tory government – include policies for small business and proposals such as the Business Links network developed by Michael Heseltine, which Labour is more likely to develop and expand than cut back.

Asked whether she believed there were areas of possible continuity in policy towards business after a change of government, Mrs Beckett said: "One of the sad things about the policy debate today is that the attitude of the present government is so utterly infantile – it will never accept that there can be any common ground or common sense."

She was enthusiastic about taking charge of science and technology – a new part of the industry portfolio – and also declared her enthusiasm for consumer issues. "I think that has a great deal of importance that is often overlooked. We have a very good team in that area with a keen eye for what is in the interests of consumers. For a long time in the public and private sectors we haven't looked as fully at the interests of consumers as we should have done."

When she moved to the health portfolio, her predecessor left her 36 crates of material to digest. She will shortly meet Dr Cunningham for the trade and industry handover.

Thorn in bid spotlight after chairman refuses CBI role

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The decision by Thorn EMI chairman Sir Colin Southgate not to take up the presidency of the Confederation of British Industry has again put the music to consumer rental group in the bid spotlight. Sir Colin cited for his decision pressure of work in preparing for the planned break-up of the business.

On the face of it, demerging the various parts of Thorn EMI should not prevent the chairman with too onerous a task. There is precious little business connection binding together recording and publishing stars like Frank Sinatra and the pop group Smashing Pumpkins, with rented furniture and telecommunications.

Where the headaches do lie is in unscrambling the legal details of 22 holding companies operating in 40 countries and a potentially hefty bill, which is likely to have come down from last year's estimates of £150m but could still be substantial.

The prize for shareholders is likely to be worth both the extra tax and the hard work to be put in by Sir Colin and his fellow directors if they do decide

to go with a demerger "early next year". Since the beginning of the year, the share price has outperformed the rest of the stock market by 28 per cent as break-up bid speculation has gathered pace. At £15.54, up 5p yesterday, the shares stand just below their all-time high. Yet many analysts believe that is just the starting point for the sort of value that could be unlocked by the separation of the parts of the group.

The jewel in Thorn EMI's crown is undoubtedly the EMI music business, now probably the third-largest in the world behind Time Warner of the US and PolyGram, controlled by the Dutch electronics giant Philips. The deal which catapulted the group into the top ranks of the music industry was the £510m acquisition of Virgin Music in 1992, bringing together blockbuster groups like the Rolling Stones, Genesis and UB40 with the likes of Tina Turner and the Pet Shop Boys.

Virgin rapidly proved its worth, chipping in record profits of £90m in 1993-94, the last year it was reported separately. But EMI also possesses a massive cash cow in the shape

of its ownership of copyrights to well over 800,000 music titles. Any break-up of the group could set off a massive auction for the EMI business, given its position as the only one of the big five groups not owned or controlled by a big group. But the Thorn rental business, which has tended to be overshadowed by the music side, could also prove attractive to bidders. Its rather dowdy image is being transformed by a move towards "rent to buy", opening up a relatively painless way for the less well-off to own sought-after consumer durables.

Based on traditional multiples of sale, cash flow and earnings, Paul Slattery at brokers Kleinwort Benson puts a value on £5bn on EMI alone, with another £2bn or so for Thorn and perhaps £350m for the HMV and Dillons record and bookshop chains. Together, that adds up to £17 a share for the group as currently constituted, but in a bidding war "it would not be stupid if we saw an end price of £22", he says.

The only fly in the ointment is whether EMI's recording artists would be keen to sign up to likely bidders, which include Viacom, the third-largest music retailer in the US, Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG, Walt Disney and News International. Many recording stars have contracts that allow them to

walk away on a change of ownership, which could substantially reduce the value of EMI unless some notoriously fragile egos are handled carefully.

But Sir Colin and Jim Fifield, head of EMI, have a personal interest in ensuring that any such moves do not get in the way of securing the best possible price in any auction for the group. At £20 a share, Sir Colin would net close to £6.5m from his share options, while Mr Fifield could pocket £3.8m on top of total entitlements last year of £7.53m.

In certain circumstances he could also pick up a further 800,000 shares in six years time, worth £1.6m at £20 a share.

Comment, page 23

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Tax break to change cars rejected

RUSSELL HOTTON

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday dismissed the motor industry by rejecting calls for tax incentives to boost the sale of new cars.

Leading executives had asked the Government to introduce a so-called scrappage subsidy, to encourage motorists to trade in old cars for new ones, in next month's Budget. But Mr Lang, whose Motor Show press conference was abandoned in disarray after protests by anti-car demonstrators, said: "There is no intention to start a scrappage subsidy."

His comment is the clearest statement yet of the Government's position after the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders submitted proposals for a subsidy to the Chancellor

last month. One car executive said yesterday: "If Mr Lang can't see the sense of a subsidy, then no one in the Government is handling it carefully."

A scrappage tax in France has boosted sales by an estimated 240,000 and has also been suc-

cessful in Spain. Ian McAllister, chairman of Ford UK, has been a strong supporter of a subsidy for scrapping cars aged 10 years or older, saying this week that it would improve the environment if more old cars were taken off the road.

The RAC estimates that the number of cars on the road that were more than 10 years old rose to 7.4 million last year from 4.9 million in 1986 because the recession had suppressed consumer demand. Richard Parham, managing director of Peugeot UK, has proposed a graded subsidy of between £500 and £800 depending on the size of new car bought.

Not everyone in the industry was concerned by Mr Lang's comments. Charlie Golden, managing director of Vauxhall, believes a subsidy would be a short-term gimmick. And John Towers, chief executive of Rover, said: "If the industry sells on just one point of advantage – price – then we are wasting our time."

Meanwhile Alex Trotman, chairman and chief executive of Ford, warned of the threat posed by South Korean car manufacturers. With companies like Daewoo making significant inroads in Europe, Mr Trotman described the country as the new Japan.

He said that 500,000 cars were exported from South Korea to Europe last year, but the target was to reach 500,000 by the end of the decade. This new "hyper competition" would be "far tougher than anything anyone has experienced in the past, here in Britain, in the US, or wherever."

Kevin believed shares belonged to RMG

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Kevin Maxwell told yesterday of the last face-to-face conversation with his father Robert before the mysterious plunge to his death from his luxury yacht four years ago. The wide-ranging conversation took place the day before the publisher set off for a short break on his boat at the end of October 1991.

Kevin told an Old Bailey jury on his fourth day of giving evidence that his father was still suffering from a chest infection, which he hoped to throw off before flying on to Israel for business meetings. During their talk Robert Maxwell told Kevin he had transferred the beneficial ownership of £22m of shares in the Israeli pharmaceutical concern Teva from BIM (Bishopsgate Investment Management, which administered the pension funds) to the Robert Maxwell Group.

His father had done exactly the same thing earlier that year with £100m worth of shares with another Israeli company, Sciter, before they were successfully sold at a handsome profit.

His father had shown him stock transfer forms for the Teva shares. He saw a "substantial benefit" if the shares were offered as belonging to the RMG rather than BIM, "particularly because of the positive PR that would accrue to the group from another successful sale of Israeli assets at a profit".

Robert Maxwell told his son he would arrange for the re-registration of the Teva shares in RMG's name. Kevin said he believed his father and thought the shares now belonged to RMG. Asked by his counsel, Alun Jones QC, why he thought that Kevin Maxwell said: "The only explanation I can give is simply years of working with him. In my whole cumulative experience of doing business with him, if he said something he meant it and I relied on what he said to me." He was not concerned about the paperwork because frequently with his father's dealings the paperwork followed later, sometimes much later.

That was the last face-to-face meeting Kevin Maxwell had with his father. But he spoke to him on the boat and at one stage his father had wanted him to fly out and join him for a business meeting. But in the end they resolved this over the telephone.

He had expected his father

back in England for a dinner of the Anglo-Israeli Association where he was a guest of honour and due to speak. But in a phone call from the boat his father explained that he had still not shaken off his cold, had cancelled the trip to Israel but would be back in time for an important business meeting he and Kevin Maxwell were due to have with the chief executive of Lloyds Bank.

Kevin Maxwell, his brother Ian and former Maxwell financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg all deny conspiracy to defraud the pension fund by misusing the Teva shares and pledging them as security for a loan.

Kevin Maxwell alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his late father to misuse the Sciter shares to pay private Maxwell company debts. The prosecution allege in both cases that the shares did not belong to RMG but the pension fund.

The trial continues today.

COMPANY RESULTS					
	Total revenue £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend	
Airbus Structures (F)	51.3m (43.5m)	2.96m (0.92m)	22.51p (1.67p)	3p (2p)	
Certech Group (F)	2.81m (2.87m)	-3.5m (1.0m)	-2.2p (1.2p)	nil (0.25p)	
Chesfield Prop (F)	17.8m (16.5m)	3.72m (3.12m)	2.78p (1.15p)	4.4p (4.4p)	
Pensons Industrial (F)	104.4m (93.5m)	5.8m (6.0m)	11.7p (11.8p)	4.5p (4.5p)	
Albert Fisher (F)	1.82m (1.42m)	31.1m (34.8m)	2.8p (3.4p)	3.75p (3.71p)	
Forresco (F)	5.0m (2.74m)	0.90m (0.48m)	7.8p (4p)	2p (nil)	
MI Glasseon (F)	182.2m (174.6m)	2.65m (2.65m)	52.85p (50.79p)	15p (14.16p)	
Premier Underwriting (F)	+/-	0.01m (-0.02m)	0.1p (-0.4p)	nil (nil)	
Russo Energy (F)	3.61m (2.40m)	0.61m (0.68m)	2.15p (2.35p)	nil (nil)	
Wesco (F)	24.2m (18.2m)	0.76m (0.28m)	2p (1p)	0.75p (0.25p)	
(F) - Quarterly (F) - Final (F) - Interim					



Sir Colin Southgate: to concentrate on demerger

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business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Good news at last from Fisher

Albert Fisher has brought few good tidings in recent years but yesterday's results finally had the look of better news about them. Stripping out exceptional £8m relating to losses on three disposals, pre-tax profits for the year to August, up 15 per cent to £39.5m, gave some cause for optimism.

Management, led by chief executive Stephen Walls, is now sounding pretty bullish and investors must hope that three years of restructuring and under-performance is about to turn into a phase of sustained growth.

Albert Fisher certainly needs one after a period of drift during which the shares have fallen a long way from their most recent peak of 135p in 1991. Yesterday they finished 1.5p lower at 53p.

Like most food groups Fisher has been subjected to the twin squeeze of the powerful supermarkets and rising raw material costs. It has responded by moving away from commodity products towards added-value ranges in an attempt to protect itself from the pinch.

Commodity products now account for 35 per cent of group sales compared with 65 per cent three years ago and Mr Walls expects that figure to fall steadily. The hope is that Albert Fisher will become less prone to natural disasters such as the hurricanes and floods that have regularly pulled the rug from underneath the company.

Added-value items such as prepared meals and sauces represent 20 per cent of the American division, though it is a moot point whether washing and chopping lettuce before putting it in a bag really qualifies. Certainly the US was the star performer last year, with profits jumping from £6.4m to £16.9m. But this was flattered by strong lettuce prices, which added around £2m to the profit figures.

The seafood sector was more disappointing but the division is now under new management and a recovery is expected this year. There should also be further growth in the sauces and dressings business, where a new factory is being built to cope with additional demand from customers like McDonalds, Sainsbury and Waitrose.

Mr Walls says Fisher is now down to its core businesses and no further disposals are expected. In-fill acquisitions are, however, on the agenda.

Management must now fulfil the upbeat promises it has made and although the shares offer a good yield, the company is still relatively exposed to com-

munity areas. BZW is forecasting profits of £42m for the current year, putting the shares on a forward rating of 12. About right.

Mowlem move shrugged off

The market has become so blasé about the travails of the construction sector, and especially of J Mowlem, one of its more troubled constituents, that it pretty much shrugged off the departure yesterday of the company's chief executive, John Marshall. The shares lost just 5p to 58p, although that puts them within a whisker of their recent low, hit in August 1992, and means they have lost almost 90 per cent of their value since they peaked in 1989.

After the announcement a month ago that the company had plunged into a £31.8m loss, mainly thanks to the heavy costs of refocusing itself on a profitable core, it was perhaps no surprise that senior heads would roll. Ken Minton, chairman since the summer, has clear views about where he should take Mowlem and his ideas plainly did

not chime with Mr Marshall's. His replacement is the group's construction head, who will have an intimate knowledge of one of the four areas the company has decided to focus on.

Whether the shares, after their recent dismal performance, are worth looking at again is hard to say. On the positive side, Mr Minton's strategy seems to make sense - stripping out the businesses, such as London City Airport, which cannot pay their way, reducing overheads to match the low level of business available and focusing on activities where a decent return is achievable.

But following the worse-than-expected dip in September, analysts have become a great deal more circumspect about their forecasts and, even after the recent fall, the shares do not appear unduly cheap on earnings grounds.

Smith New Court has pencilled in profits of £4.5m for the current year to December, disregarding the exceptional restructuring write-off that smashed a hole in first-half figures and will do so again in the full-year stage. Next year, £8.5m could be achievable, implying earnings per share of 4.1p and

a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14.

That is hardly compelling, especially as the shares, on the basis of a promised 2p final dividend, yield only 4.3 per cent, close to the market average. Given all the uncertainty, the shares are unlikely to reverse recent weakness.

New radio group tunes in to AIM

Independent Radio is giving a shot in the arm to the fledgeling Alternative Investment Market by raising £9.7m in a mainly institutional placing. It is a large sum for a start-up, representing almost double the next biggest cash raiser on AIM and nearly a quarter of the £40.3m total garnered in new cash by the market to date. But Independent's executive management, led by Michael Connolly, has a strong track record in the business, having successfully turned round the Preston-based Trans World Communications radio group before selling it last year to EMAP for £7m.

The money now being raised by Independent represents seed-corn finance for a predatory venture hoping to scoop up small radio stations which have won licences to operate in the north of England. The group has identified 30 such outfits which may be willing to sell out, particularly where initial investors backed start-ups to take advantage of the Business Expansion Scheme tax breaks and are now looking for a way out.

Prices vary, but for a typical outfit of £1m, Mr Connolly thinks they can secure an audience of up to 800,000 a time. The second strand of the strategy is to attempt to win the licences for Yorkshire and East Midlands, the two largest franchises to be allocated by the Radio Authority next year. Success would involve expenditure on studios and other infrastructure and the intention would be to return to shareholders for the cash.

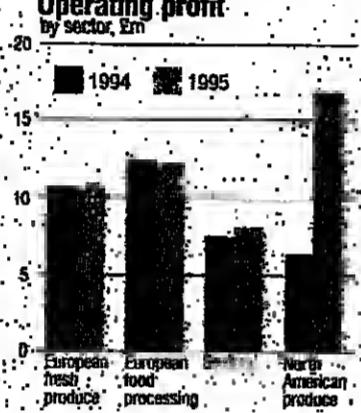
The potential is undoubtedly there, given the rapid growth in commercial radio advertising. The strength of Independent's management gives it a decent chance to exploit that potential, as yesterday's 1.7p closing premium to the 100p placing price recognises. But given the risks with any start-up, the shares should not be chased.

Albert Fisher : at a glance

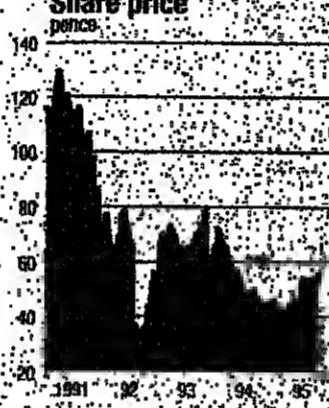
Market value: £378m, share price 53p

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£bn)	1.24	1.25	1.26	1.28	1.30
Pre-tax profits (£m)	89.0	25.9	26.9	34.8	31.1
Earnings per share (pence)	3.67	3.67	3.67	3.71	3.75

Operating profit: by sector, £m



Share price: pence



Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Warning: Black holes can damage your eyes

Asil Nadir's claim that the only reason he had dark rings under his eyes was because he was a workaholic can at last be officially challenged.

Richard Stone, the court-appointed administrator who led the initial investigation

into the finances of Polly Peck International, has been talking of the early days before the discovery of "the black hole".

When the administrator first met Mr Nadir in the Polly Peck offices above Annabel's, he asked the tycoon if his jaded peepers were in any way influenced by the proximity of the night-club. No, Mr Nadir assured, it was all down to hard work. Mr Stone says he believed him. Until he discovered the Cypriot's five mistresses on the Polly Peck books.

Meanwhile, the long-suffering Chris Barlow, co-administrator of Polly Peck, is looking decidedly perkier after returning from his peace talks with the fugitive businessman without a bullet in his backside.

Mindful of the treatment meted out to British accountants in northern Cyprus in the past, Mr Barlow wrote to the government demanding full and proper protection. He was duly met at the airport by squads of police who took him to Mr Nadir's hotel.

Once there he was crushed into a tiny lift with two colleagues and a sweating guard. Barely had it started when the lift broke down.

Although he confessed to not having actually read it, Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, yesterday appeared comforted that the Singapore report on the collapse of Barings had reached the same conclusion as his own - ie Nick Leeson was a rogue who lost £1bn.

Oddly this is not a view shared within Barings itself where they are keen to put



Julian Richer (above), hi-fi retailer turned trendy management consultant, has taken a sudden turn into the second-hand car trade. The man who galvanised the Asda workforce by persuading his pal Archie Norman to introduce the "drive a Jaguar for a month" incentive programme has opened a Mercedes outlet in Leeds.

Mr Richer became famous by rewarding loyal staff at his hi-fi chain, Richer Sounds, by lending them his Rolls-Royce for a month. The company quickly entered the *Guinness Book of Records* in the highest-turnover-per-square-foot category and left the founder free to preach staff motivation techniques to big business. The secondhand car shop, called Julian's, will buy and sell prestige Mercedes. "We've got very good vibes about this one," said a spokesman.

many middle-class professionals but particularly for those paid to forecast the depth and extent of the 80s downturn as accurately as possible".

Quite. But the "median" salary of SBE members is still £42,500, compared with an inflation-adjusted £20,000 in 1964. The problem is that economists hit their peak earning years in their early thirties.

Sir Phil Harris, carpet king, South London boy made good and the only remaining Tory party donor, likes to stick to his roots. Among the impressive list of City advisers listed in the Carptright annual report are the bankers - National Westminster (Tooting).

WIN A LOTUS ELISE

with the INDEPENDENT

Few cars excite such love and loyalty as a Lotus. Launched in 1948 by the legendary Colin Chapman, the Lotus appeal is summed up by its two most famous marques - Esprit and Elan. Now a new thoroughbred joins the Lotus stable, the Elise.

Launched to acclaim at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September, this futuristic two-seater is perhaps their most exciting car ever - and we have one to give away.

Lotus describe their new model as "small, strong, ultra-light, very fast and great fun to drive". The low weight of 675kg benefits braking, handling and steering response. The adjustable driver's seat gives firm yet comfortable support and the minimalist instrumentation displays clear, immediate information.

Visually the car is stunning, the curvaceous lines

set off by unique five-spoke alloy wheels. The light weight and aerodynamic shape makes the Elise a "green" machine, cutting down on fuel consumption and thus carbon dioxide emissions.

The 1795cc 4-cylinder fuel-injected engine delivers a top speed of around 120mph and the Elise, worth approximately £20,000, comes with catalytic converter, engine immobiliser, cloth trim and black vinyl hood.

Lotus are exhibiting the Elise at this month's Motor Show at London's Earls Court and to make it easier to view our prize car, there is a voucher on this page that gives £2 off the normal entry price of £9.

As well as receiving the keys to a Lotus Elise, our competition winner will

also get one year's free insurance provided by Norwich Union Club Insurance. This service offers a 24-hour Clubline which, should you have an accident, connects you to a dedicated Club Incident Manager who will take immediate care of the problem.

To be in with a chance of winning our prize you must collect six differently numbered tokens from the 14 we are printing in the *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*. At least one token must come from the *Independent on Sunday*. Today we are printing Token 6 and the entry form. We will print an entry form at the end of the competition. Rules as previously published.

INDEPENDENT/LOTUS ELISE ENTRY FORM

Send your completed entry form, along with 6 differently numbered tokens (including one from the *Independent on Sunday*), to:
Independent/Lotus Elise Prize Draw, PO Box 203, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TY.
Closing date is 17 November 1995.

SECTION 1

TITLE: (tick as appropriate)
Mr 1 Mrs 2 Miss 3 Ms 4 Other 5

Forename(s):
Surname:
Address:
Town:
County:
Postcode:
Home telephone no.:

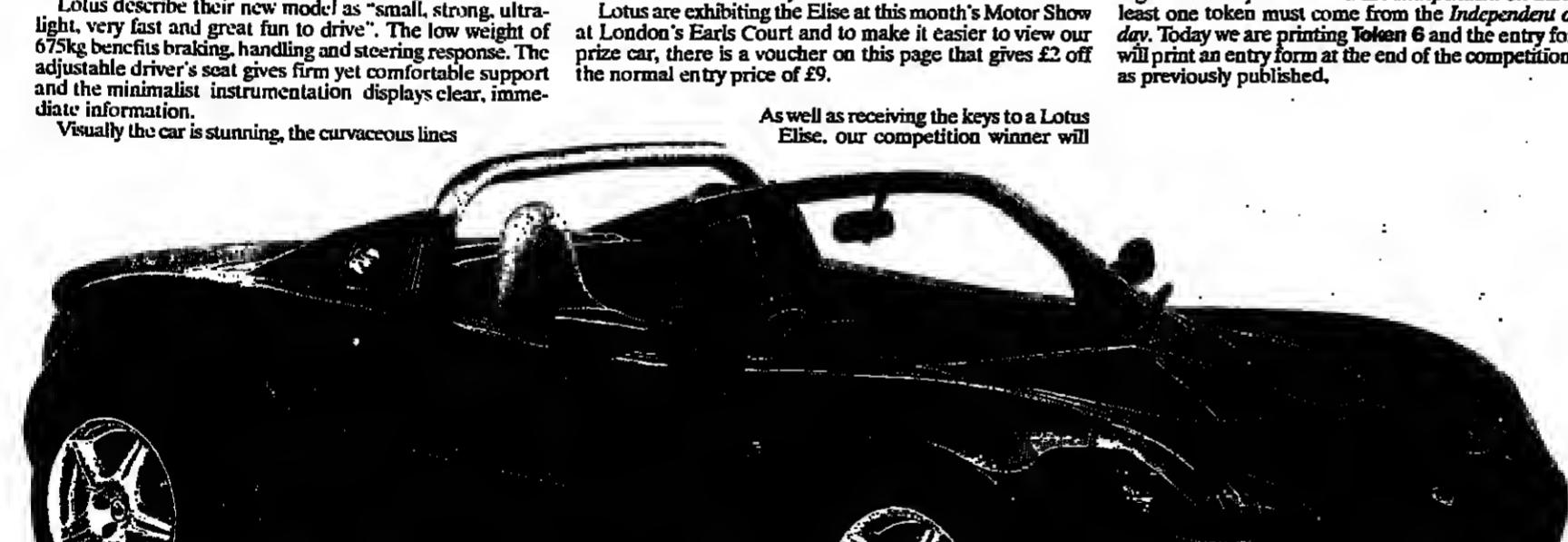
AGE: (tick as appropriate)
18-20 21-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

SECTION 2

It would help The Independent if you could tell us about any newspaper or your partner buy, by ticking the appropriate boxes below for both your Daily and Sunday purchases. Put a tick against papers you have delivered in the columns 'Delivered at Home'. For papers you buy yourself, please indicate how often you buy by ticking against the relevant papers in either the 'Bought most days' or 'Bought occasionally' columns.

DAILIES	DELIVERED AT HOME	DELIVERED MOST DAYS	DELIVERED OCCASIONALLY	SUNDAYS	DELIVERED AT HOME	DELIVERED MOST DAYS	DELIVERED OCCASIONALLY
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ind. on Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Observer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fin. Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday Telegr.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunday Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mail on Sun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun. Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun. Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We may occasionally send you details of offers from ourselves, or other companies, which we think would interest you. If you do not wish to receive these mailings, please tick the box



INDEPENDENT



TOKEN 6

INDEPENDENT

£2 off Adult Entry or £1 off Child/Senior Citizen Entry to the London Motor Show. This voucher entitles one person to the above discount for one day at the London Motor Show (Earls Court Exhibition Centre). Please present this voucher at the ticket office. Valid 20-29 October 1995

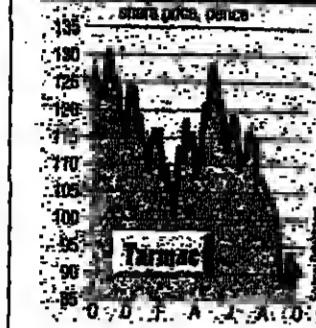
THE LONDON

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100	3,578.6	-14.4
FT-SE 250	3,938.2	-3.1
FT-SE 350	1,779.4	-5.9
SEAO VOLUME	659.7m shares	
	30,181 bargains	
Gems Index	92.91	-0.02

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Footsie goes into reverse as bid talk slows down

The takeover rumour mill – which has pushed shares to new peaks – almost ground to a halt as the stock market twiddled its thumbs nervously on the anniversary of the 1987 crash.

The FT-SE 100 index slipped 14.4 points to 3,578.6 in largely uneventful trading with the inevitable profit taking contributing to the caution.

Much of the remaining bid speculation centred on fund manager Garfmore, 11p higher at 504p, with a strike today from BAT Industries or National Westminster Bank the popular guess. Bank of Scotland, up 3.5p to 267p, was another still in the bid frame and Vodafone, as the long anticipated US offer continued to captivate, gained 6p to 269.5p.

Insurances were also embroiled in bid talk – and some positive analysts' comments also contributed to the action. Best bet prices were not held with General Accident ad-

vancing 21p before ending 13p down at 67.5p.

But the major influence on many shares was a high powered investment conference held by stockbroker Panmure Gordon.

More than 100 overseas fund managers who invest in London shares are attending the two day affair which started yesterday and involves presentations by about a dozen UK companies.

Pearson, the banking to media group, is due to meet the foreign investors today. With talk flowing of carve-up bids or even a shot from an overseas media group the shares gained 18p to 661p.

Henderson Crosthwaite has estimated Pearson's break up value at 900p and there were stories Cazenove, the company's stockbroker, had, for internal consumption, come out with an estimate of 835p. Pearson was at pains to dampen expectations considerably.

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

The story said it believed the rumour was untrue. However City cynics were not convinced that Cazenove, the most secretive of City securities houses, had not, like many other houses, produced its own estimates of Pearson's worth.

Allied Domecq, with figures due next month, was another helped along by break up talk.

ABN Amro Hoare Govett has pondered the possibility of Allied selling its prized spirits division, which includes Teacher's and Ballantine's Scotch whiskies and Beefeater gin, and concentrating on retailing. Analyst Julie Bower believes Allied could get £4.7bn for its spirits operations.

Pearson was at pains to dampen expectations considerably.

Speculators in Smith & Nephew, the healthcare group, will have to lower their sights as the shares slumped into the casualty ward. Johnson & Johnson, the US group which has for long been rumoured as a suitor has instead descended on Cordis, a medical group, with a \$1.6bn offer.

Yorkshire Electric's give-away package left its shares 15p off at 899p. Arjo Wiggins' Appleton lost 6p to 231p as SBC Warburg cut its profit estimates while GEC slipped 7p to 326p on talk trading was falling below expectations.

Cray Electronics firmed 1p to 44p on bid talk; Northam held at 195p, with investors seemingly unmoved by talk of strong trading. Tring International, a cassette publisher, plunged 27p to 59p and Malaia, a garage chain, lost 4.75p to 9.25p on profit warnings.

Laird, the vehicle components group, reversed 15p to

419p. Analysts have visited its French operations and worries surfaced that profit downgrades will follow.

Trafalgar House duly produced a grim trading statement. But takeover hopes, the Keswick family's promised support and thoughts that the shares could be a recovery play, left the price 0.75p firmer at 21.75p. Turnover, at nearly 30 million shares, was the highest of the day.

Grosvenor Intra, held at 230p, has raised £1.4m through a share placing with institutions at 219p. Director David Bruce, who founded the Firkin pub chain, has sold 200,000 shares, also at 219p, and now has 3.8 per cent.

Balkychild Gold continued to slide on worries about technical problems and its need for a cash injection, falling 5p to 15.2p. But Williams de Broe remains keen, talking of a value up to 300p a share.

TAKING STOCK

Acorn Computer surged 31p to 144p as word seeped out that investment meetings were being arranged. They are likely to concentrate on Advanced RISC Machines, the 42.8 per cent associate, which has developed a new range of high-performance, low-powered computer chips and is seen as the jewel in the Acorn crown.

Best known for supplying computers to schools, Acorn lost £2.4m last year and £7.6m in the half year to July. The shares topped £10 in the early 1990s.

Stanford Rook, developing a tuberculosis treatment, has won a buy recommendation from Nick Woolf of Nomura, the Japanese securities house. Stanford shares have had a remarkable run. They closed at 190p, up 20p. Since arriving on AIM the price has been down to 96p.

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: ex rights x Ex dividend; E-allot a United Securities Market; S suspended or partly paid; N Paid Shares.

Source: Finweek

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from Seven. Simply dial 0891 123 323, followed by the 4-digit code priced next to each share. To access the historical reports dial 0891 123 323 followed by one of the two digit codes below:

FT-SE 100 Real-time 60 Sterling Rates 64 Privatisation Issues 36
UK Stock Market Report 61 Building & Repair 35 Water Shares 39
UK Company News 62 Wall St Report 65 Electricity Shares 40
Foreign Exchange 63 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41

Anytime with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 323. For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4375 (9.30am - 5.30pm).

Call cost 3p per minute (cheap rate), and 7p at all other times. Call charges include VAT.

MARKET LEADERS: TOP 20 VOLUMES

Stock	Volumes	Stock	Volumes	Stock	Volumes
Stobart Water	10,500	Shell Gas	11,000	Anglo Group	8,700
Dunlop	32,500	GPE	11,000	Royal Insurance	7,200
Tristar House	20,000	Philips	10,000	General Elec.	7,200
BT	18,000	Hanvic	8,400	Prudential	7,200
South Wales Elect.	16,800	Vodafone	8,000	Cable & Wire	7,700
				Telecoms	5,800

FT-SE 100 INDEX HOUR BY HOUR

Open 3587.7 down 5.3	11.00 3581.4 down 11.6	15.00 3577.4 down 15.6
09.00 3585.0 up 2.0	12.00 3581.1 down 11.9	16.00 3575.7 down 12.0
10.00 3580.0 down 12.2	13.00 3580.4 down 12.6	Close 3578.6 down 14.4

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Source: Finweek

efficient:

on average your monthly banking takes 3 minutes

change your bank to suit your life

0800 24 24 24

We reserve the right to decline to open an account for you. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc.

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OTHER SERVICES

Abbey

Admiral

Airline

Alfred Holt

Amoco

Anglo Group

Anglo American

Anglo Gold

Anglo Irish

Anglo-Petroleum

Anglo-Suisse

Anglo-Vulcan

Anglo-Well

sport

Red Rum still pulls the crowds at Aintree

Racing

GREG WOOD

Aintree will not stage a card until the middle of next month, but the course's doors were thrown open yesterday to allow the public to pay their respects to Red Rum, who was buried by the Grand National winning post after his death on Wednesday.

Throughout the day, a stream of Red Rum's fans, many carrying wreaths, made their way to the low, white picket-fence which marks his grave, to pay their respects to the greatest horse in Grand National history. Among them was Jackie Grainger, now 76, who was the head lad at Ginger McCain's stable when the horse arrived there in 1972. "He won nine handicaps in the three and a half years I was there, including his first Grand National and the Scottish National," he said. "He was a great horse and I am a proud man to have been associated with him."

On the Aintree grandstand, the flag was flying at half-mast, while the course executive will consider a permanent tribute to

Red Rum. "There will definitely be a memorial to him here," Joe McNally, the track's marketing manager, said. "We will take our time to make sure we plan something fitting." It also seems certain that a race will be named in his honour.

On a day when punters were prepared to visit a track which was not racing, the Harris Hill Stakes card at Newbury was always going to be low-key. The Group Three feature race, which features on the CVs of Kris and Tiro, was won by Tumbleweed Ridge, who was beaten only narrowly by the excellent Royal Applause in the Gimcrack at York and was runner-up to Even Top in his latest race at Newmarket. Despite his narrow defeat of Busy Flight yesterday, though, only Brian Meehan, his trainer, seriously believes that the son of Indian Ridge has a live chance in next year's 2,000 Guineas.

Richard Face, the racing minister for New South Wales, announced yesterday that a new body, the NSW Thoroughbred Racing Council, will replace the Australian Jockey Club as the state's governing body. "A report has revealed widespread corruption and fraud," Face said. "The carnival is now over for these people." He added that his action was necessary to retain public confidence in the sport. A man in his position, however, should surely be familiar with the old saying about horses and stable doors.

weot to Newmarket a gallop short, but this is exciting," Meehan said. "Provided everything goes all right I'm sure he will be a Guineas horse next year."

The sadness and gestures of respect which followed the death of Red Rum, not to mention the thoughtful dignity with which he was interred at Liverpool, have reflected great credit on British racing. There is less for the sport to celebrate in Australia, though, where a major administrative body has been relieved of its responsibilities following allegations of corruption and race-fixing.

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Tumbleweed Ridge (second left) wins yesterday's Harris Hill Stakes at Newbury

Photograph: Robert Hallam

NEWBURY

HYPERION

4.10 General Command
4.40 Sweet Mignonne
5.10 Coxwell Steptoe

BETTING: 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 3-7, 3-8, 300-300 Chancery, 4-1 Wishing, 8-1 Wishing Promise, 12-1 Symbol of Success, 35-4 others.

GOING: Hurdles - Good; Chases - Good to Firm.

■ Course: 1/2E of town near A24, Station (service from London, Paddington) adjourns course. ADMISSION: Members £18; Tattersalls £8; Silver Ring £5 (CAF's half price). CAFE: Free; Picnic area £3 per car plus £3 per person.

STONING: All races

■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: D Nicholson — 24 winners from 105 runners gives a success ratio of 22.9% and a loss to a 51 level state of 22.0%; N Headcorn — 21 winners, 21.6%, +5.4%; O Shrewsbury — 18 winners, 66 runners, 27.3%, -33.1%; M Pipe — 17 winners, 77 runners, 22.1%, +8.4%. ■ LONG-DISTANCE WINNERS: D Nicholson (20) — 143 rides, 26.0%, -15.3%; J Osborne — 27 winners, 145 rides, 26.5%, +6.4%; R Huchett — 18 winners, 117 rides, 16.2%, +12.0%; P Holley — 18 winners, 62 rides, 21%, +3.0%.

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Backboard Bounder (3:10) & General Command (4:1D) have been sent 273 miles by G Richards from Grangelees, Cumbernauld; Executive Design (2:4D) & Sweet Mignonne (4:0D) sent 253 miles by Mrs M Reevell from Lingdale, Cleveland; Antimite (3:1D) sent 235 miles by Mr S Remond from Bunting, Sefton, N Yorks.

2.05 OCTOBER HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £7,000 added 3m 110yds Penalty Value £4,956

2. 104812 MOVING OUT (GB) 3yo Sherry Bay 71.10 M J Cheffy (7)
2. 065114 DUNLEN SET (GB) 5yo Chestnut Filly 71.10 R Duxbury (7)
3. 221502 LANSDOWNE (GB) 3yo F Toff Compton 71.10 P McCoy (7)
4. 011132 JAZMIN (CAN) 10yo Foal Chestnut Cheltenham Child D Nicholson 41.2 11 M Maguire
5. 450411 BREW BOSS (IRE) 4yo Brown Mare 71.10 P McCoy (7)

BETTING: 4-4, 11-12, 14-15, Moving Out, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 2-3 Great Marquess, 12-13, Laneside.

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BETTING: 4-4, 11-12, 14-15, Moving Out, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 2-3 Great Marquess, 12-13, Laneside.

GOING: Hurdles - Good; Chases - Good to Firm.

■ COURSE: 1/2E of town near A24, Station (service from London, Paddington) adjourns course. ADMISSION: Members £18; Tattersalls £8; Silver Ring £5 (CAF's half price). CAFE: Free; Picnic area £3 per car plus £3 per person.

STONING: All races

■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: D Nicholson — 24 winners from 105 runners gives a success ratio of 22.9% and a loss to a 51 level state of 22.0%; N Headcorn — 21 winners, 21.6%, +5.4%; O Shrewsbury — 18 winners, 66 runners, 27.3%, -33.1%; M Pipe — 17 winners, 77 runners, 22.1%, +8.4%. ■ LONG-DISTANCE WINNERS: D Nicholson (20) — 143 rides, 26.0%, -15.3%; J Osborne — 27 winners, 145 rides, 26.5%, +6.4%; R Huchett — 18 winners, 117 rides, 16.2%, +12.0%; P Holley — 18 winners, 62 rides, 21%, +3.0%.

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Isolated amid an embarrassment of riches

It is just under a year since Manchester United stumbled out of the Nou Camp after being humbled by Barcelona, a damning indictment of all that was wrong with British football.

On Wednesday, an estimated 100 million television viewers may well have concluded nothing has changed and nothing has been learned. The island which gave the game to the world remains cut adrift from its modern practice.

Rangers were humiliated by Juventus in Turin just as utterly as United had been in

Barcelona. Yet both teams had gone into the games on a high. Last year, United had just beaten the then leaders, Newcastle, and would be top within three weeks. This year, Rangers are already on target for an eighth successive title.

They were, therefore, the best sides to offer Blackburn, as they showed again on Wednesday, are simply not functioning at present. Under the current philosophy, they are even less equipped for Europe than Rangers.

Following the defeats of two champions, Glenn Moore assesses why British football is the poor man of Europe

the Champions' Cup and Johan Cruyff has since dismantled the team. Juventus were well beaten by Milan in Italy on Sunday and although favoured to reach the European Cup final, they will probably have to beat the resurgent Real Madrid in the quarter-final first.

Blackburn, meanwhile, cannot even beat middle-ranking teams like Rosenborg Trod-

heim and Legia Warsaw. Their probable failure to qualify for the last eight is the fifth by English champions since the ending of the European ban. Rangers have fared little better, although they did make the equivalent of the semi-finals in 1992/93.

Paul Ince said earlier this week that the Italian game was "not as aggressive as people in England kept saying". Who? A

cursory glance at Channel 4's coverage shows calcio to be far more sophisticated and less overtly aggressive than the Premiership. Now Ince, at 27, says it is too late to change his game.

In one way he is right, technique is instilled at seven, not 27. Instant cures are impossible. Some clubs are trying to bridge the gap. Manchester United are attempting to adapt their style to place greater emphasis on possession, Liverpool already do so.

Rangers began Wednesday's match with a European approach

although Ajax have proved that total domestic dominance need not hinder success in the wider arena, the Dutch game is more compatible with European football as a whole than the Scottish.

The Bosman case offers hope for the former, the latter is a more distant prospect, despite the success of the Scottish Under-21s. Of Rangers natives, only Andy Goram, Richard Gough, and possibly Ally McCoist and Alan McLaren are of European standard. Charlie Miller will be, but who else?

It is no wonder Rangers pine for a British league. For Cleland found.

Cleland and Gordon Durie (who was booked again) will be suspended from Juventus' visit to Ibrox in 12 days time. Paul Gascoigne will be fit – but so will Gianluca Vialli.

Harford's head stuck in the sand

Phil Shaw reflects on another depressing night for Blackburn Rovers in Europe

go to Russia and beat Group B's outstanding team, Spartak, to keep the issue on life-support machines.

Legaia, arguably the weakest outfit Blackburn have met in a less than formidable section, would seem to offer Harford's men their best chance of breaking the duck. The Poles are bound to miss their excellent sweeper, Jacek Zielinski, who will be suspended, though it is still hard to picture Blackburn bridging a chasm in flair and fluidity.

They were, admittedly, without Graeme Le Saux, Jason Wilcox and Stuart Ripley, as well as the ineligible Lars Bohinen and Billy McKinnay. Nevertheless, Harford was not

undeterred by Uefa's restrictions on foreigners to anywhere near the extent Manchester United were last autumn.

The problems go beyond personnel, however. In another phrase coming back to haunt Harford, regarding Blackburn's adherence to 4-4-2 and a long-ball game, he said during a summer of transfer inactivity: "If it's not broken, why fix it?" They have now lost 12 of the last 21 matches, yet he left Poland praising them "rigid" shape – which spectacularly misses the point about Europe – and asserting that they looked like "the Blackburn of old".

Perhaps, by that, Harford meant the side who could not escape the former Second Division until Jack Walker bankrolled Kenny Dalglish? Flippantly aside, a greater share of possession and some unproductive late pressure do not add up to control of a game.

Harford also demonstrated a depressing lack of feeling for a competition whose allure is second only to the World Cup. It was as if the lessons absorbed and applied by previous champions, notably Liverpool, had been erased. He was "not bothered" about this group, the Premiership remained Blackburn's priority. Whether he means staying in it or winning it again was unclear.

It is a tiresome view – not least because each Champions League win costs £500,000 from Uefa, with a draw worth £250,000. Surely even Blackburn, who would probably not have lasted more than one round under the old format, cannot afford to be sniffy about such sums? Walker missed the trip, but his record in business indicates that he certainly would not be.

Dalglish was also absent again, ensuring renewed debate about his role as "Director of Football". When he first came to Ewood Park the only row of noughts came on the cheques he wrote. Unless there is a recognition that the present "style" has outlined its usefulness, its points return in Europe might well come to be represented by one.

Last year the German and Turkish FA overruled results after video evidence. Fifa later censured both FAs and stated that video evidence could only be used in judging disciplinary measures.

Fifa argues against instant video replay

Football is considering following cricket's example in making key decisions with the aid of television evidence, writes Glenn Moore.

Fifa, the world game's governing body, has been discussing the use of a "second referee" in a conference in Monte Carlo this week. The official could judge disputed goals, penalties and sendings-off from a monitor in the stand. Such a system is similar to cricket's "third umpire" who rules on leg-before-wicket and run-out appeals.

The impetus for such a move comes from television companies in Europe and the United States. Footfall has long been unpopular with some television executives because its constant flow prevents advertisements being shown during play. Fifa has already experimented with the use of time-outs in the recent Under-17 World Championships.

Though officially designed to give coaches the chance to talk to players, the time-outs also allow for more commercial breaks. With television replays

deciding disputes, there would be up to a two-minute delay – long enough for a short advertisement.

To its credit, Fifa is not convinced and Sepp Blatter, the general secretary, argued against the idea in Monte Carlo. He was supported by Michel Vaulet, a former World Cup referee, but another French World Cup official, Joel Quiniot, declared himself in favour after taking part in a recent experiment.

Maradona's "Hand of God" goal against England in the 1986 finals was cited as an example of where injustice could have been prevented. However, opponents noted that, had such a system been in use in 1966, England and West Germany might still be arguing about whether Geoff Hurst's second "goal" crossed the line or not.

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Wisbech sandwich scandal

Non-League notebook

Wisbech Town, one of East Anglia's most respected non-League clubs, were suspended from the Jewson (Eastern Counties) League last week, writes Rupert Metcalfe. Not for the usual crimes, in such cases, of financial mismanagement or for fielding unregistered players – but for their failure to attend meetings to answer complaints about a lack of sandwiches and other hospitality for visiting teams and officials.

The League's handbook lays

down the law in this matter: "Complimentary tea must be provided for players, match officials and visiting league and club officials pre-match; half-time and again at full-time. It also expected sandwiches, biscuits and other light refreshments will be served to league and club officials at half-time and full-time, and to match officials and players at full-time."

Wisbech, it seems, did not play ball – complaints were received by the league from some match officials and away teams that the snacks were not up to scratch. That alone did not lead

to their ban – but when the required number of officials did not attend two meetings called by the league to discuss the problem, the Cambridgeshire club were suspended by the league's management committee.

Both sides were due to attend another meeting at Diss last night, so if Wisbech have promised to cater by the rules in future, their suspension may be lifted today. It has been, as their joint-manager, Ian Jones, admitted, an "embarrassing" episode for the club, who finished runners-up in the Jewson League last season.

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Fergal O'Brien joined his Team Sweater Shop stablemate Hendry in the televised phase of the event with an impressive 5-2 success over Acrington-hensed Pakistani Shokil Ali.

O'Brien, who later described his opening four frames as "flawless", ran in breaks of 82, 63, 86 and 66. He now meets James Wattana.

Anyone with half a brain would have put the morning game on much earlier."

Hendry, favourite to capture his fourth Grand Prix title in eight years, fell 2-1 behind before breaks of 75, 60, 58, 69 and a closing-frame clearance of 112 helped him comfortably avoid a shock defeat.

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SPORT

Video evidence condemns Dicks

Football

LIZ SEARL AND CLIVE WHITE

Julian Dicks, the West Ham full-back, was yesterday suspended for three matches after being found guilty of "violent conduct" by the Football Association amid claims that, despite hard evidence, it had settled for a trial by video.

The charge arose from an incident which left Chelsea's John Spencer needing eight stitches in a head wound.

After three hours of deliberation in a London hotel, an

FA commission discounted expert advice and a submission by the full-back's victim.

Dicks was accused of stamping on Spencer's head out of the referee's view. The incident was captured on Sky Television and the FA decided to act, despite protestations from Spencer that he believed the injury was not deliberate.

Spencer submitted a written statement for the hearing, which explained his view. The Chelsea manager, Glenn Hoddle, did not allow him to attend the hearing.

But after viewing video

recordings "from two angles on very many occasions", the commission decided to follow the lead of the match referee, Robbie Hart. He was asked to view the incident and then said that he had seen the stamping on the field, Dicks would definitely have been sent off.

Controversially, the commission did not accept advice offered by Peter Harrison, the general secretary of the Physical Education Association, who told the commission that the collision was inevitable and an "unfortunate accident".

Harrison had been called to

"Ray Harford also demonstrated a depressing lack of feeling for a competition whose allure is second only to the World Cup. It was as if the lessons absorbed and applied by previous champions had been erased."

Phil Shaw on Blackburn's European failings, page 31

the hearing by West Ham, who had been confident before the hearing that Dicks' action would be vindicated, despite his poor discipline record. Dicks has been booked 54 times and sent off nine times during his career. After the verdict, the club's managing director, Peter Storrie, said it would consider launching an appeal over the next two weeks.

"We are obviously all very disappointed," he said. "The short sentence imposed of three games shows that there was an element of doubt in the proceedings. It seems to me that it

is the way the game is going. Trial by video is part of the business now and we have to accept that it works both ways."

Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, would not say whether he thought Dicks' "hard man" image had prompted the FA's decision to penalise the player, but he was shocked at the result. "I am convinced that he was innocent," he said, although he refused to blame the absence of Spencer for the guilty verdict. He was adamant that Dicks was not guilty in the eyes of the club, and announced that he would not be fined by

them. The player will also retain his first team place.

Premiership clubs next season will be able to name five substitutes but will still only be allowed to send on three, the Premier League has decided.

The decision should improve clubs' tactical options.

Hull City have placed their entire playing staff on the transfer list after being served with a winding-up order by the Inland Revenue.

The musician Rick Wakeman has dismissed reports that he is part of a consortium offering to inject £10m into struggling

Manchester City. Speculation that Wakeman was involved followed a remark by Michael Peck, a Manchester-based businessman, that his consortium was supported by a rock star. Wakeman is a big City fan.

Birmingham City are being investigated by the Football League after their First Division rivals Stoke City accused them of making an illegal approach to re-sign striker Paul Peschisolido, who is married to the Birmingham managing director, Karen Brady.

Rick ponders video replays, page 31



Candid camera: Julian Dicks is caught on video stamping on Chelsea's John Spencer

Everton draw little consolation

GUY HODGSON

Everton

Feyenoord

Larsson, were the sum total of the Dutch efforts before the interval.

Everton, meanwhile, had three clear efforts, the best of which was a shot by Paul Rideout that tested the agility of Ed De Goeij after seven minutes. There was also a header from Graham Stuart that flew over and a shot from Samways that was not hit hard enough to profit fully from Stuart's intelligent pass.

The moment that had Goodison buzzing with frustration, however, came when Jackson burst past a defender on the right and then was bowled over by Blinker in the area. It looked obstruction at the very least, but the referee waved play on.

Like the first half, Feyenoord began the second on the attack and an intelligent pass to the left of the area by Blinker allowed Giovanni van Bronckhorst a sight of goal. His shot from a narrow angle was saved by Southall, but only by his legs.

Everton's response was immediate, Samways only just failing to reach Anders Limpar's cross from the left after 47 minutes. Six minutes later, Stuart was denied contact with the ball as he dived in by a late touch from a defender.

There was alarm in the Dutch area, too, when De Goeij slipped as he punched clear and was saved only by Ronald Koeman's quick thinking. The home frustration was growing, however, with every failed attack.

A warning for the home side came after three minutes when Neville Southall had to fling himself to his left to block Regi Blinker's shot. This, and a high, wide effort by Henrik

Samways (6-2-2); Southall; Berger, Short, Abbott; Jackson, Holmes, 81; Horne, Samways, Urswart, Limpar (Stewart, 81; Stuart, 46). Feyenoord (4-1-3-2); De Goeij; Zwijnenberg, Muis; Larsson (van, 81), Wirsching, Bronckhorst; Olafur, Blinker (Trifunovic, 60). Referee: H Weber (Germany).

Donato strikes for Deportivo in Turkey

ROUND-UP

Trabzonspor's two central defenders, Osman Ozkulu and Ogun Iemizukanoglu, will both miss the crucial second-leg match after receiving yellow cards.

Some 27,500 fans watched the game at the Avni Aker stadium in this fishing city in Turkey's northern coast.

In another second round, first leg tie in Russia, Dynamo Moscow gained a slender advantage when they beat Hradec Kralove, of the Czech Republic, 1-0 thanks to a 59th-minute goal by Yuri Kuznetsov.

FOOTBALL RESULTS
European Cup-Winners' Cup
Second round first leg
Borussia 0-0 Feyenoord 0-0
Other ties: Dynamo Moscow 1, Hradec Kralove 0; Hradec Kralove (Czech Rep.) vs Trabzonspor (Turkey) 0; Deportivo La Coruna (Spain) 1, Donau-Bruck 0.

PONTING LEAGUE First Division: Liverpool 0, Oldham Athletic 1.

Andrew calls a halt to his international career

Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

Wasps Rugby Club last night did the nearest thing to throwing out two of their most distinguished players when they told Rob Andrew and Dean Ryan, their defectors to Newcastle, that they would no longer be considered for selection.

Whereupon Andrew, having said all season that he wished to carry on his England career, announced his retirement from international rugby at the age of 32 with 70 caps and a record 373 points. Lawrence Dellaglio replaces Ryan as captain.

The London club's trauma had been exacerbated earlier yesterday when Nick Phipps, their Irish prop, confessed that he too would be joining Andrew, Newcastle's development director, and Ryan, Andrew's new assistant, in the North-east. This latest body-blow served to reinforce the feeling among the selectors at Sudbury that enough was enough.

Considering the service they

have given Wasps, it is a sour ending for Andrew and Ryan. Jack Rowell, the England manager, will not be too distraught at having to decide on a new outside-half - Mike Catt or David Pears for the South Africa match at Twickenham on 18 November.

Ryan had this week become Andrew's first major recruit for Newcastle - a turn of events that forcibly changed Wasps' mind about choosing Andrew for as long as the Rugby Football Union's 120-day qualification period remained in force.

In the end, the position of both Andrew and the club became untenable when Andrew was seen to be undermining Wasps from the inside by trying to pick off their best players, using the substantial carrot of salaries reckoned in Ryan's case to be worth as much as £50,000 a year.

However, Andrew's parting shot was typically gracious. "It is with great regret that I have decided to retire from international rugby," he said. "Following Wasps' decision to exclude Dean Ryan and myself from the team, I have decided that I must retire.

Cardiff's 'derisory' offer for Davies

Cardiff's first offer to take Jonathan Davies back to rugby union amounted to a "derisory" £30,000. Warrington said yesterday, insisting that they will not release Davies without compensation of at least £200,000.

Graham Armstrong, the Warrington chief executive, said that Cardiff offered £30,000 for the

goalkeeping utility back when they began talks a fortnight ago. "Jonathan is under contract until June 1997 and we are adamant we don't want him to go," Armstrong said. "If he signs for Cardiff without our approval, we will sue him for breach of contract.

"We understand two other Welsh clubs and a London side

want Jonathan, but they will have to wait until they come up with £200,000 or more.

They offered a derisory £30,000 for Jonathan's immediate release and insisted there was no more money available. Now we have had a fax from Cardiff's lawyers, and it's clear they want Jonathan straight away."

Trabzonspor did most of the attacking in the first half and had their best chance in the 33rd minute when the ball nearly went in after a goalmouth scramble.

After going a goal down, Trabzonspor put Deportivo's goal under severe pressure, but were unable to take advantage of several more goal scoring opportunities.

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